THE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA DEFENCE FORCE
VANUATU (1980)
T0
BOUGAINVILLE (1990)

by

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
TREVOR A. ROGERS (RET'D)

B Bus (Econ.)
MDS

(July 2002)

A Thesis for the Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
of
The Australian National University

Statement

I, Trevor A. Rogers, certify that the enclosed thesis on the Papua New Guinea Defence Force - Vanuatu (1980) to Bougainville (1990), represents fully work undertaken by myself during the course of my research.

Trevor A. Rogers

(16 September 2000)

Acknowledgments

A thesis on the Papua New Guinea Defence Force covering the period 1980 - 1990 records a time in the country's history and that of its armed forces during which there were profound developments. I am privileged to have been able to research and write a record of the decade. In doing so, I have drawn on the comprehensive research of others who share my interest and on my service as an Army officer on three tours in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1971/73, 1985/88 and again in 1991/92.

The thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement and commitment of my supervisor, Dr Ron May whose enthusiasm for research, unselfish advice and extensive experience in PNG affairs ensured that the momentum was maintained. Valuable support was also forthcoming from Dr David Horner, Dr Bill Standish and Mr Tony Regan.

Above all, my research would have foundered but for the quiet encouragement and patience on the part of my wife, Denise. She bore the demands of my work on family life over the years taken to complete the thesis, prepared always to listen to concepts and extracts. The thesis and its contribution to the history of Papua New Guinea is immeasurably the result of her support.

Abstract

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) remains an enigma — even to the closest observers. The absence of any army attempt in the post-independence period to wrest power from the government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) — especially during the difficult decade after independence — is in marked contrast with the experience of other Third World states. In that, PNG has benefitted from a tradition of military professionalism, reinforced by continued ties with Australia after independence, and from a history of democratic elections, which has seen the smooth transfer of power before and during 1975. Moreover, PNG did not, until the secessionist crisis on Bougainville in 1988, face an insurgent threat, which might have led to a more rapid politicisation of the army.

Yet PNG's democratic traditions are under threat inviting unconstitutional action by the army. The prerequisites for a coup, including the PNGDF's penchant for indiscipline, have emerged during the decade between 1980 and 1990. Papua New Guineans — facing unemployment, higher costs of living, and law and order problems — could look to the PNGDF to assist in their plight. The public's perception of the army stems from the government's preparedness to assign the PNGDF a key role in internal security.

But the PNGDF is in a poor state and, in the event of a coup, factionalism could see the Force unravel, pitting soldiers against each other — damaging the fragile national unity. The image of a professional organisation, relative to other PNG institutions, is a veneer, masking deep-seated problems of morale and indiscipline. Loyalties are divided, becoming more pronounced with politicisation of the Force. PNGDF intervention risks provoking civil unrest, which it would be hard pressed to contain, especially outside the urban centres.

The PNGDF developed from the formation of the Papuan Infantry Battalion during the Second World War, emerging as an independent army in PNG in 1975. While comparisons can be made with other developing countries, especially with those in Africa, the PNGDF is unique — a reflection of wider PNG society. The PNGDF is born of a complex traditional society where, even today, tribal values and customs prevail. These traditional influences have been

reasserted since independence, relegating professional obligations. Factional demands have been superimposed on tradition to add to the complexities of army culture. Loyalties are in conflict in balancing *wantok*, professional and factional obligations in a society where law and order problems have become a way of life.

Notwithstanding their contribution to the war effort, local soldiers defied authority when the mood took them. Indiscipline ensured that indigenous battalions were disbanded in 1945 and was the basis of resistance to the reformation of the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) in 1951; the latter prevailed, prompted by security concerns over Indonesian intentions. Nonetheless, serious indiscipline after 1951 again led to calls for the PIR's disbandment. In response, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) sought to instil professionalism and loyalty, leading to increased numbers of Australian officers in the PIR. The PIR enjoyed a close association with the ADF, contributing to the army's elite status in PNG prior to and after independence. However, memories of the colonial period inevitably faded. The PNGDF, after its creation in 1973, developed its own style.

In 1980 the army faced its first real test, when during the Vanuatu rebellion, the *Kumul* Force combined surprise and the concentration of force to strike quickly at the rebel heartland. There, the PNGDF captured rebel leader, Jimmy Stevens, resulting in the collapse of the Vemarana rebellion — in spite of PNG concerns over casualties, and Australian doubt over PNGDF capabilities.

By the mid-1980s, the Force turned its focus to internal security, with soldiers assisting the police, in spite of longstanding rivalry. The internal focus combined with politicisation of the PNGDF leadership to create the ingredients for unrest. Challenges to government authority were initially limited to protecting PNGDF interests. Little interest was shown in a takeover, in spite of the Fiji coups in 1987. However, relations with government were seriously strained as the army struggled in 1989-1990 to restore authority on Bougainville in the face of rebel opposition, and over international condemnation of human rights abuses.

Against that background, this thesis argues that the prospect of army unrest has arisen from the PNGDF's increasing role in internal security — and from politicisation of the force and indiscipline — during the period 1980-1990.

Table of Contents

Glossary

ADF	Australian Defence Force
ANGAU	Australian and New Guinea Administration Unit
AO	Area of Operations
ATS	Air Transport Squadron
BEM	British Empire Medal
BCL	Bougainville Copper Limited
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CBE	Commander of the British Empire
CIS	Corrective Institutions Service
CPC	Constitutional Planning Committee
CRA	Conzinc Rio Tinto of Australia
CRW	Counter Revolutionary Warfare
CIS	Corrective Institutions Service
COPS	Chief of Operations
CPLANS	Chief of Plans
DCP	Defence Cooperation Programme
GPMG	General Purpose Machine Gun
HF	High Frequency
HMPNGS	Her Majesty's PNG Ship
HRH	His Royal Highness
ILPOC	Integrated Local Purchase Order
JCFADT	Joint Committee Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
JDP	Joint Declaration of Principles
JSC	Joint Services College
LMG	Light Machine Gun
MP	Member of Parliament
MVO	Member of the Victorian Order
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NEC	National Executive Council
NGIB	New Guinea Infantry Battalion

NSAC	National Security Advisory Committee
NSP	North Solomons Province
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OCS	Officer Cadet School
OPM	Free Papua Movement
PIR	Pacific Islands Regiment
PIB	Papuan Infantry Battalion
PLA	Panguna Landowners Association
PPP	Peoples Progress Party
PPB	Pacific Patrol Boat
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PMAR	Port Mine Access Road (Arawa to Panguna)
PR	Public Relations
RMTLTF	Road Mine Tailings Leases Trust Fund
RPIR	Royal Pacific Islands Regiment
RPNGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
SLR	Self-Loading Rifle
SOE	State of Emergency
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNTEA	United Nations Temporary Executive Authority
VHF	Very High Frequency
VMF	Vanuatu Military Forces
VP	Vanuaaku Party

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force
Instrument of State or Threat to Democracy?

Introduction

At independence, Papua New Guinea's Constitution defined for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) an external focus and, as a last resort, a subordinate role to the civil authority in internal security. In that, the government sought to ensure that the post-independence army would not have a political role or pose a threat to democracy. Yet, by the government's hand through neglect and poor governance, and by circumstance, the PNGDF has come to play an increasing role in internal affairs, especially since 1985. That, combined with indiscipline and poor leadership within the Force, has unwittingly created the risk of PNGDF action against the state — by a demonstration of force or through organised action by elements of the military, and possibly the police.

A number of researchers on PNG, including Nelson (1972), Sundhaussen (1973), Mench (1975), Turner (1990), MacQueen (1993), May (1998), and Dorney (1998), agree that the PNGDF has the potential for unconstitutional action. Researchers also agree that sufficient cause exists to trigger such a move against the civil authority. However, on balance, the judgement is that the PNGDF is unlikely to mount a coup. That view has, since independence, held sway in the wider community and in government in Australia and in PNG — in spite of political crises in that country and in PNG's closest neighbours.

However, PNG's ability to cling to democracy since independence belies the country's capacity to unravel, posing risks for that nation and for those others, especially Australia, which have interests in PNG. Many of the clues to the risk of a military coup in PNG lie in its history and in that of the PNGDF, particularly arising from the often-turbulent 1980-1990 period. The clues become even more obvious when the views of key officers in the Force, who have shaped the PNGDF since independence, are taken into account.

Inside views, evident in the contributions of Mench (1975), East (1981), Glanville (1984) and Liria (1993), all former serving officers in the PNGDF, have

been valuable in understanding cultural and professional influences on the military. Yet those insights have been limited since 1984 with Liria's contribution on the PNGDF's 1989 Bougainville operations a stark exception.

The thesis argues that the prospect of a coup has arisen from the PNGDF's increasing role in internal security — and from politicisation of the Force and indiscipline — during the period 1980-1990. Furthermore, the thesis explains that the PNGDF has not intervened before now because of the influence of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) after independence, and because the PNGDF has so far been prepared to limit its remonstrations to the protection of its corporate interests. Further, the PNGDF has accepted that democratic process has determined the transition of successive governments. However, indiscipline, factionalism and politicisation arising from the period 1980-1990 now make the army unpredictable, and have underlined the potential political power wielded by the force with its monopoly on arms.

The study provides a timely assessment of the PNGDF and its capacity to usurp power. The conclusions are drawn from a broader examination of the PNGDF than has been the case with most other literature. The thesis contributes knowledge of the PNGDF gained through personal experience since 1971, observing first hand the Force's involvement in law and order operations, its changing emphasis in training, politicisation of the army leadership, and escalating morale and discipline issues (See *Research Method* below). The need for such a study has been given impetus by rumblings within the PNGDF arising from its role in internal security, especially on Bougainville in 1989-1990. Regional events too have been significant, principally the coups in Fiji in 1987.

The thesis seeks to understand the PNGDF, taking into account its history and social circumstances — consistent with the emphasis in Lawson, May and Selochan (1998: 4). Importantly, the judgements stand out from the consensus of opinion, evident since PNG's independence, which has conceded some form of unconstitutional action by the army is possible but collectively ruled out a coup. Moreover, the thesis provides an insight into the risk of regional instability; an issue which continues to demand the attention of the Australian government and

its agencies. Given the unique nature of PNG society and of the PNGDF, many of the issues relevant to military intervention are not easily applied to the PNG case without account being taken of the complex web of social obligation and of the political dimensions evident in PNG society. These provide important reasons for a special study of the Force and the issues are spelt out in more detail later, especially in Chapter 8. This examination of the PNGDF contributes to the ongoing debate on the reasons for a military coup by demonstrating — consistent with arguments of Finer (1988) — that a combination of external and internal factors provide the catalysts for an army coup. In that, the study shows the impact on the army of events during 1980-90 whereby political decisions to involve the Force in internal security combined with a breakdown in discipline within the PNGDF and led to politicisation and factionalism.

Researchers have sought to find clues to the causes of military intervention in an analysis of case studies in which civilian regimes were overthrown. The search has proven difficult not least because the military is a complex organisation in both its nature and history. Moreover, military units are often shrouded in secrecy in a bid to protect their capabilities and command structure and so safeguard the army's ability to defend the country and to maintain internal security. However, in spite of differences in emphasis, researchers have identified common elements in the history of military intervention. Some researchers have chosen, in a few cases boldly, to narrow the causes, arguing that other issues, while important, have less prominence in any study of civil/military relations.

In a wide-ranging literature, military interventions have been subjected to close scrutiny, through case studies. Those studies have highlighted the many forms of unconstitutional action taken by the military, including mutiny, defiance of orders, violent and non-violent demonstrations against the government, rogue military action in defiance of government policy or of its objectives, and the military coup. The sequence, scale and intensity of these military actions often characteristised the extent of military frustration and anger over issues, culminating in — when patience was exhausted — the military coup.

The thesis identifies the historical, economic, political and societal causes of military intervention in the PNG context, demonstrating in the process, that the causes are inextricably linked. The PNGDF study approaches the causes of intervention by examining an army which has yet to mount a coup, rather than, as in most other studies, evaluating coups after the event (an exception is Horowitz's study of the military in Sri Lanka).

Coups have had a high level of frequency and intensity across the world since the 1930s. The impact of coups on societies has varied. In extreme cases, especially where the military has held onto power, as in Argentina and Chile, evidence of the abuse of power, including against human rights, has been exposed. Researchers such as Janowitz (1964), Huntington (1968), Lissak (1976), and Perlmutter (1977) looked for common elements in the military's history, noting two broad categories: ex-colonial forces and armies formed from pre-independence fighters. A common theme which emerged was that the army was a more cohesive force than the fledgling civilian institutions. Janowitz focussed on the importance of professional ethics and the role of democratic institutions which underpinned civilian supremacy, seeing the army's contribution in law and order and policing borders. Huntington saw the relationship of officers to the state as the principal focus in civil-military relations. Lissak saw risks in the army perception of its role as guarantor of the state. Perlmutter emphasised that corporatism leads to intervention, and, in contrast to Huntington, believed that professionalism was only one guarantee against such intervention. Others, such as First (1970) and Horowitz (1980), argued that threats to military corporate interests provoked army intervention. Nordlinger (1977) and Horowitz (1985), among others, saw the military as an extension of society, noting the part played by factionalism and rivalries, which led to coups.

Finer (1988) subjected coups to a comprehensive study, examining the military, the state and society, triggers for coups, the army's capacity to govern, and the circumstances under which troops return to their barracks. He identified the causes for military intervention among issues internal and external to the military. Finer sounded a warning for political leaders, noting that armies, with

their marked superiority in organisation, highly emotionalised symbolic status, and monopoly of arms were often in a better position to govern than civilian governments (ibid.: 5). Importantly, he noted that armies 'drew their legitimacy [for action against governments] from their creation at independence' (ibid.: 6). Army intervention often only required a catalyst for action. According to Finer, 'where public attachment to civil institutions is weak ... military intervention in politics will find scope — both in manner and substance' (ibid.: 18).

Finer's research suggested that the military, as servants of the state, would not be bound by rules subordinating the force to the civil authority, if the expectations of the troops, built largely on self perception of their status, were not fulfilled (ibid.: 23). Governments would need to manage those expectations through a consultative process in order to retain control over the army. The process extended beyond the appointment of an army commander to satisfy political imperatives. Rather, commanders must exercise real authority — including in decisions on military equipment — so that their advisory role to government extended beyond a puppet appointment. Such partnerships reinforce civil authority; enhance troop morale and the status of military leaders; and facilitate budgetary control over defence expenditure. Finer believed that intervention by the army was not inevitable. Rather, by understanding the army, political leaders could reduce the risk of army action against the civil authority.

Michael Somare, then chief minister, recognised in 1973 the need for a better understanding of the military. That coincided with efforts by the Australian Department of Defence, which encouraged closer links with PNG's political leaders as a means of cementing a professional relationship at independence (See Chapter 2). However, after independence, those links were eroded and political leaders distanced themselves from the army, appointing their choice of commander. The post-independence approach fell short of maintaining contact with the military and its role in PNG society.

Finer (1988) believed certain prerequisites were necessary before an army would usurp power. He pointed to 'the need of a sense of power and ... some kind of grievance' (ibid.: 54). Civilian dependence on the military or rule by a

political or social minority opposed by the masses which are too weak to overthrow the existing government could increase the risk of military intervention (ibid.: 69). However, not all schools of thought agreed with Finer on the causes of military intervention.

Janowitz (1964) believed that internal factors provided the indicators of potential military action against the state. He focussed investigation on the conditions prevailing in the military to give insight into military unrest. Substantial though his arguments are, Janowitz's claim that internal factors are predominantly the cause for a coup, have not been borne out in the PNGDF case. Even as conditions within the Force have deteriorated, the army has confined much of the protest to the barracks. On those occasions where troops have taken to the streets, such as in the 1989 pay riots, their anger has been targetted, resisting any attempt to spread the unrest. So internal issues have not been sufficient to prompt military intervention in PNG. Rather, the aggravation of internal grievances through politicisation and factionalism, while committing the army to internal security, has tipped the balance towards more provocative military unrest.

Horowitz (1980) too searched for the reasons behind military intervention among internal factors, chiefly in the motives of officers. He chose as a focus of study an attempted coup in Sri Lanka in 1962. Given the role of officers in the disciplined structure of armies, even among crude army models in the least developed Third World countries, an emphasis on the officer corps would seem appropriate. Research by Horowitz on the role of the officer corps in coups has relevance to this thesis, which highlights the cumulative and detrimental effects of politicisation of the PNGDF officer corps. But there the commonality ends, in large part because the PNGDF officer corps is not professional, nor do the officers command respect. So even if officers have grievances and the inclination, they would have difficulty commanding, by their positions alone, a following — inside or outside the Force — sufficient to contest government.

Huntington (1957) argued that external factors, not internal, were the chief cause of intervention. He argued that the nature of civil-military relations was a

pivotal element in any discussion of the likelihood of military intervention. Huntington (ibid.: viii) developed a way to examine such relations in a system of interdependent elements. He emphasised the importance of professionalism — measured by the level of competence in the military, distinguished by a hierachy of ranks which reflect achievement, seniority and ability, and motivated by military ideals — in ensuring the army's subordination to the civil authority while maintaining a capacity to meet its internal and external security obligations (ibid.: 16, 17, 74). Any erosion of that professionalism, particularly through politicisation, posed risks for governments. Such professionalism would be manifest in the competence levels within ranks which themselves reflect 'professional achievement measured in terms of experience, education and ability' (ibid.: 17). Huntington believed problems emerge when `the nature of an officer's political loyalties became more important to the government than the level of professional competence' (ibid.: 35). Huntington pointed to the officer corps as a key to any army threat, as an important part of professionalism. Yet his focus on the officer corps and on professionalism within the ranks seems at odds with Huntington's claims that coups are the result of external factors. Further, Huntington's belief that professionalism kept soldiers out of politics was open to challenge.

Finer (1988: 21), for example, noted that even professional armies, such as in Germany and Japan, intervened in politics. He believed that armies must accept civil supremacy, but saw acceptance contingent on professionalism, loyalty and good leadership (ibid.: 22). Finer's argument on the issue of civil supremacy is worth underlining. Notwithstanding its constitutional duty to remain subordinate to the civil authority, the army's attitude will invariably be influenced by the impact of government policy on its corporate interests. Further, the army will be influenced by social attitudes, in keeping with the views of Nordlinger (1977) and Horowitz (1980) that the army is an extension of society.

Perlmutter (1981) shared Finer's opposition to a lack of professionalism as the principal cause of intervention. Perlmutter argued that corporatism, not lack of professionalism, provides a *prima facie* case for intervention, and military

professionalism is only one guarantee against intervention (ibid.: 2). Perlmutter believed that cohesive armies conducted coups against weak political opposition. In these cases, political activists among the officer corps or those with political ambition drew upon events, such as economic problems in the country, to mount a coup. According to Perlmutter, threats to the army's corporate structure or capabilities risk triggering a coup.

Research also focussed on the types of coups (Welch 1974; Horowitz 1980), the performance of military regimes (Hoadley 1975; Nordlinger 1977), and the types of military regimes (Finer 1962; Janowitz 1964; Nordlinger 1977; Perlmutter 1981). A number of researchers examined the army's capacity to govern in the wake of a coup. Janowitz (1964) acknowledged that the army may be useful in restoring order but ultimately impeded development. Sarkesian (1978) believed that the army had inherent difficulties managing development. Finer (1988: 12) was also critical of the army's ability to run a country, noting a technical inability to administer. The competency of military governments was also covered in work by Nordlinger (1970) and Heeger (1977). Consensus emerged that the army's ability to assume power through superior firepower and organisation did not translate into an ability to govern, a conclusion equally true in the PNGDF case. Some military regimes, faced with problems of governance, opted to restore power to civilian regimes and return to barracks (Huntington 1968; Finer 1988).

Several researchers have previously examined the subject of coups in relation to the PNGDF. Luckham (1991) expanded on Huntington's theme of civil-military relations, contributing to the debate by examining coup types and the role of factions in the Asia/Pacific region. Luckham (1991: 14) noted that the PNGDF had not, as had the military in South Korea, Thailand and Pakistan, 'established deep roots in the economy, social structures and political system'. He noted further that the 'PNG political order was not yet dependent on the [PNGDF] as in Thailand, Pakistan and Indonesia' (ibid.: 19). Luckham highlighted the importance of factions as a key to understanding the military's political behaviour. In PNG's case, Luckham noted that the country had survived

precariously through periods of unrest, in part, because of the limitations both on the power exercised by PNGDF officers and on the military's budget. The weakness of political institutions was, in Luckham's view, the key to PNG's vulnerability to military intervention.

Nelson (1972), Mench (1975), Turner (1990), MacQueen (1993), May (1998) and Dorney (1998) shared the view that some form of unconstitutional action was possible in PNG. Nelson (1972) saw a failure of government — corruption, inefficiency and secessionism being principal causes — as the opportunity for the army to assume power. Mench (1975) considered that military intervention required cooperation between the army and the police. Turner (1990) pointed to corruption and the threat that posed to stability in PNG, noting that factions in the army were the key to understanding military behaviour. Those elements combined with the military use of intelligence and public disenchantment, according to Turner, to prompt intervention. MacQueen (1993) believed on balance that military intervention could be avoided so long as army officers had access to political positions and the army remained ineffective.

The theme of the army's influence on politics and society was the subject of work by Janowitz (1964), Nelson (1972), Sarkesian (1978), Finer (1988) and Monteil (1993). Research by Huntington (1957), Janowitz (1964), Welch (1974), Horowitz (1980), Perlmutter (1981), and Finer (1988), points to common factors which provide the potential for possible military intervention. These include politicisation of the military through political interference in military affairs. Such interference may extend to corruption in equipment acquisitions, bribery, misuse of military funds, and the interference for political purposes in military activities and in the promotion and appointment of officers. Other factors causing military intervention include factionalism, corrupt government, internal unrest within the country, and indiscipline within the ranks of the army.

Research which has focussed on the causes of unrest in the South East Asian and Pacific areas such as Nelson (1972), Sundhaussen (1973), Luckham (1991), and Turner (1990) have also contributed to the study of military coups through a regional perspective. Mench (1975) stands out in his identifying of the

PNGDF's potential for unrest after independence. But he concluded in 1975 that the army would not challenge government. The PNGDF would, according to Mench, have a principal focus on internal security. That prediction could not have foreseen the acts of PNGDF indiscipline which emerged in the 1980s, or the extent to which the government's writ had failed, or the deterioration brought about by the endemic law and order situation since 1985.

Political observers and academics, attracted by PNG's coming independence, subjected the PNGDF to scrutiny in a wideranging pre-independence literature. Ryan (1970) and Nelson (1972), both of whom understood the changes taking place, concluded that the PNGDF could play a prominent role. Colebatch (1974) looked at the provincial makeup of the Force, police/army relations, soldiers' attitudes and the role of the military. Mench (1975), an ADF officer with PIR experience, believed that the army would be used largely for internal security. Hastings (1969) had earlier warned that such operations risked drawing the PNGDF into a political role. Sundhaussen (1973) considered that to avoid those risks, the PNGDF should be given a political role from independence, similar to that enjoyed by the Indonesian Armed Forces. However, the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC), set up prior to PNG's independence, did not share that view.

For its part, the CPC wanted to avoid the history of army takeovers experienced by African states. Political leaders agreed to retain the PNGDF but ensured that the army had defined responsibilities, remained accountable to the civil authority, was set a ceiling strength in balance with the police, and was given a strict framework for its involvement in internal security. Mench (1975: 198), like the CPC, saw similarities between PNG and Africa in colonial background, decolonisation processes, and the development of national defence forces.

After independence, most literature on the PNGDF was confined to key events. For example, articles on the army increased in 1980 with the Vanuatu deployment. East (1981), a former ADF officer and PNGDF Chief of Staff, and Glanville (1984), a former expatriate PNGDF officer, produced articles for the *Pacific Defence Reporter* and local media. Shears (1980), Beasant (1984) and

Gubb (1984) added outsiders' views of the PNGDF *Kumul* Force. Later, law and order operations, pay riots in 1989, and the Bougainville rebellion provided a focus for PNGDF observers, notably in the wake of the 1987 Fijian coups.

May and Spriggs (1990) and Spriggs and Denoon (1992) provided accounts of PNGDF operations on Bougainville along with articles from Dorney (1990), then an ABC correspondent in PNG. Liria (1993), a PNGDF intelligence officer on Bougainville in 1989, provided a first-hand account of the rebellion from a PNGDF perspective. His book, *Bougainville Campaign Diary*, remains the only record by a PNGDF member of the army's history since independence, aside from the official diaries of the Vanuatu deployment.[1] Sharrad (1993) contributed to the literature by examining the *Role and Management of the PNGDF during the Bougainville Crisis*. Sharrad highlighted the tensions which arose between PNG culture and Western-style systems. May (1993), in a review of the PNGDF, drew together these events, pointing to the changing role of the Force since independence and providing a contemporary view of the PNGDF's potential to challenge the government.

May (ibid.: 74-75) concluded that a coup remains a remote possibility though PNG appeared to be moving towards a more controlled society. Dorney, in 1990, felt that a coup was possible if Papua New Guineans lost confidence in their country's leadership. Those views still hold true. This thesis considers these themes, examining PNGDF history since 1940, in particular the period between 1980 and 1990, which, more than any other period, helped shape the PNGDF.

Research Method

The thesis — based on interviews with PNGDF members, often by senior commanders on the ground (some of whom requested no attribution) about their first-hand experiences — is especially important given the absence of wider research on the PNGDF and given the dearth of official PNGDF records. In the latter case, official diaries were not kept by Commanding Officers after 1980. Fires in some units further reduced official record holdings. Records relating to Bougainville deployments have not been released due to ongoing operations.

The material in this thesis also draws on my recollections of the PNGDF — checked against diaries and notes kept for the period — spanning four decades. During that time, I served in the PNGDF Training Depot (1971-73), the First Battalion, Royal Pacific Islands Regiment (1 RPIR) (1985-88), and the Australian High Commission as a defence adviser (1990-92). In 2000-2002, I returned to PNG as a project team leader. At times, the nature of my association with the PNGDF places constraints on my ability to comment on issues not documented in the public domain, notably aspects of the PNGDF's Bougainville operations. Further, because of the conditions of my employment in the Defence Intelligence Organisation (1989-90), and in the Office of National Assessments (ONA) (1992-97), and my continuing links with the PNGDF, it has been necessary to cut off the narrative at 1990. In any event, 1990 provided a logical cut off because the principal influences on the PNGDF's decline arose in the period 1980-1990. The army's involvement in five law and order operations, especially on Bougainville, serious breaches of discipline, politicisation of its leadership, friction with the civil authorities, and challenges to government authority, occurred in that period. While focusing on 1980-1990, the thesis discusses the period up to 1980 in some detail to provide the necessary background, and looks ahead to the contemporary implications of the developments which took place between 1980 and 1990.

Military Intervention

The research for this thesis points to external and internal factors, in combination and over time, as the triggers for PNGDF intervention. In that, the PNGDF case reinforces the arguments of Finer (1988: 283) that 'military intervention is the product of two sets of forces, the capacity and volition of the armed forces to intervene ... and the condition of the society'. The thesis is not able, any more than Finer or others have been able, to identify factors — internal or external — which are predominant in their capacity to lead to unrest in the military. However, some issues, for example, professionalism of the officer corps (cf. Huntington 1968; Horowitz 1980), play an important part in the research. Yet even these do not, in my view, hold the key to the analysis of coup potential in the

---

[1] The diaries were removed from Headquarters PNGDF and their whereabouts remain a mystery.

PNGDF case. Indeed, Lee (1969: 159) noted that studies 'confined to military motives and to military organisation exaggerate the strength of the boundary between military and civilian affairs'.

The thesis does support Huntington's arguments on the need for professionalism and reinforces Horowitz's emphasis on the importance of a professional officer corps. Indeed, the arguments contained in this thesis highlight, in the PNG context, the risks which have been created through PNG's politicisation of the officer corps — at the expense of professionalism. As a result of events in 1980-1990, we see a force bereft of professionalism, exhibiting factionalism which, arguably, now confuses regional loyalties, prepared to protect its corporate interests, led by an officer corps with limited promotion opportunities. Corruption and ineffective government have seen the disillusionment, already apparent among the wider population, infect the PNGDF rank and file. The thesis argues that these factors in combination could lead to a military coup in PNG. The thesis challenges the long-held and contemporary belief that while some form of unconstitutional action by the PNGDF is a possibility, a coup would not be mounted in PNG.

The army has had its share of problems since its formation in 1940. Acts of indiscipline, at times on a large scale, occurred over pay and conditions and as a result of inter-communal violence. Such incidents fuelled the arguments of critics opposed to a local army that such a force would lack loyalty, fail to appreciate its role in support of civil authority or maintain even basic discipline among its ranks. For others, the incidents were viewed as teething problems, pointing to the need for review and redirection. Notwithstanding concerted efforts to address the problems, early instances of unrest were followed by more acts of indiscipline, before and after independence.

Since independence, the Force's principal role has been to defend the sovereignty of Papua New Guinea. However, after 1984, the PNGDF focussed its attention increasingly on internal security — a role that the founders of the nation provided for in the Constitution. That reinforced the army's status in PNG society. However, the PNGDF's involvement in law and order operations has

come at a high price. Indiscipline escalated to the point where soldiers openly confronted the government in 1988 and in 1989. The manner in which the PNGDF was used in aid to the civil power presented problems, straining relations between the army and the police, the government and the public. Problems also arose over the legal provisions under which soldiers supported the civil authority. In the period 1980-90, the unrest has been confined to protecting PNGDF interests, especially conditions of service. In early 1989, the Regiment faced its greatest test in its efforts to maintain Port Moresby's authority in Bougainville Province. For the first time, PNG's army was fighting against its people, in a secessionist rebellion. That experience, combined with the problems dogging the Force, from its focus on internal security, brought the army into conflict with the government, resulting in challenges to civil authority by the PNGDF.

The thesis is structured to examine these developments, providing evidence of a Force in decline, characterised by its defiance of government, and the preparedness of its membership to edge closer to a coup. The PNGDF was at its peak in 1980, evidenced by the Vanuatu operations (Chapter 3). From 1981 to1983, the army had to be content with patrolling (Chapter 4) while politicisation and other changes were occurring in the Force (Chapter 5). The PNGDF's use in internal security from 1984 saw a willingness to challenge government authority (Chapter 6). Those challenges assumed worrying dimensions on Bougainville (Chapter 7) where the groundwork for a coup was laid (Chapter 8).

Against the background of law and order operations, border duties and civic action patrols, the PNGDF was undergoing changes — changes important in understanding its declining professionalism, evidenced by acts of indiscipline, and poor morale. Coinciding with those changes was the declining presence of the ADF during the decade, which had until then reinforced the PNGDF's subordination to the civil authority. The cumulative effect of the changes during the period 1980-1990, particularly arising from the PNGDF's increasing role in internal security, the politicisation of the Force, and indiscipline, have created a situation in which an army coup, with objectives which goes beyond the protection of PNGDF interests, is a distinct possibility.

Chapter 2

History of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force 1940-1979

'For the first time in the history of Papua and New Guinea, men from both territories were living, working and fighting, side by side, dependent on each other for their very lives, all members of one elite group' (Sinclair 1990: 215).

The Pressure of War

Calls for the formation of an armed force in Papua to support the administration had been made as early as 1884. Later, a small, armed constabulary was formed in Papua and expanded in the early days of the First World War as protection against the German presence in (northeast) New Guinea. Australian forces seized New Guinea in September 1914 and Australia received a League of Nations Mandate over New Guinea in 1921, with a separate administration and its own armed police force under the control of Australian officers. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the constabulary was a well-formed body with an important role in Australia's administration of Papua and New Guinea. Indeed, the first recruits of the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) would come from the ranks of the constabulary (Granter 1970: 9).

On 19 June 1940, the first company of the PIB was formed from the indigenous population of the Australian Territory of Papua and the mandated territory of New Guinea (ibid.: 9). The remainder of the PIB was to be raised the following year, prompted by the threat of a Japanese invasion. The Australian government envisaged that the PIB soldiers would be used for 'scouting and reconnaissance' (McCarthy 1962: 45). After their initial training, soldiers found themselves engaged in unloading cargo vessels and quarry work, sentry duty and in the preparation of defensive positions (Sinclair 1990: 134). Such work was important as time was short for all the tasks still to be completed by the newly-formed military administration, and concern at the impending invasion spurred all to greater effort.

If the PIB soldiers were keen to fight, their baptism of fire came as an unwelcome surprise. The Japanese were an impressive adversary — experienced

fighters with modern equipment. The first Japanese air attacks on Port Moresby, in early 1942, resulted in a 'collapse of morale and saw the desertion of several PIB recruits' (ibid.: 134). Many Australians no doubt shared the foreboding experienced by the PIB at the time and with good reason. The Japanese had yet to be defeated — this would not be achieved until 1942 at Milne Bay[2] — and there had been precious little time for the defence of Papua New Guinea.

Elements of the PIB, with their Australian officers, first confronted the Japanese Army at Awala in Northern Province on 23 July 1942 (McCarthy 1962: 124). (Papua New Guinea would later commemorate the event as Remembrance Day.) PIB soldiers had set up defensive positions ahead of the Japanese advance from Buna-Gona (See map at Appendix 1). As the Japanese approached, the order was given to fire on the enemy — 'an historic order [being] the first given to PIB soldiers to attack enemy ground forces' (Sinclair 1990: 140). In the face of superior enemy numbers, and overwhelmed by the speed of the attack, the PIB soldiers scattered (ibid.: 125).

During the Kokoda campaign that followed, the soldiers again fought well. Apparently, they saw no conflict between loyalty to their people (in the Melanesian sense) and their duty as soldiers. In one example, a PIB rear party noticed a local villager leading a Japanese patrol to the battalion position; he was shot (ibid.: 144). Soldiers gave their all in the Kokoda campaign when it appeared that the Japanese would advance on Port Moresby. An Australian officer observed at Imita Ridge — the last bastion of defence before Port Moresby — that the 'PIB men were ... battered, tired, hungry and cold from the fighting and the weary grind of carrying wounded over impossible tracks' (ibid.: 145).

In the Kokoda campaign (July - November 1942), the true value of the PIB soldier was demonstrated. The troops were used for 'reconnaissance and deep penetration' (Granter 1970: 10), drawing largely on their notable bush skills. The soldiers also played a vital part in the evacuation of casualties. By the time

---

[2] General (later Field Marshal) Slim, commenting on the Japanese defeat at Milne Bay in 1942, said 'It was Australian soldiers who first broke the spell of Japanese invincibility' (McCarthy 1962: 187).

the Buna-Gona campaign began in late 1942, 'the award of the first decoration for bravery had been [made] to the first indigenous soldier' (Sinclair 1990: 148). Members of the PIB, and later the NGIB, took part in every major campaign, [from the time contact was made with the Japanese on 23 July 1942] until the surrender on 15 August, with the exception of Milne Bay' (Mench 1975: 15). The Salamaua campaign illustrates their contribution:

> PIB members carried out scouting and reconnaissance work with great ... skill ... obtaining details of the enemy's strength — fortifications, gun emplacements, dispositions — that were of vital importance (Sinclair 1990: 161).

Even as the PIB increased its strength to battalion size, there was still unmet demand for local soldiers. Eventually, approval was given for the raising of a second battalion with its members drawn from New Guinea. The First New Guinea Infantry Battalion (1 NGIB) was raised at Wampit near Nadzab in March 1944. By September 1944, a second battalion was raised in spite of the shortage of young men available for such service. Later, this second battalion served in the Wewak campaign where local soldiers were used in 'set-piece attacks' for the first time (Granter 1970: 12). (Critics, opposed to the formation of a local military force, claimed that 'local soldiers could not be used in this manner' (ibid.: 12).)

Two years elapsed between the formation of the PIB and the raising of the NGIB — despite the threat posed by the Japanese army operating in Papua and the mandated territory of New Guinea between 1942 and 1945. One reason for the delay was resistance to the formation of large bodies of local soldiers. Indeed, some, particularly ANGAU (Australia and New Guinea Administration Unit) officers who were largely pre-war government officials, believed that arming the natives would cause post-war problems for PNG (Mench 1975: 17). For much of the war the debate continued over the worth of local soldiers. During the war, unruly elements tarnished the PIR's reputation, showing the potential problems a peacetime militia might face. Eventually, problems led to the disbandment of the

PIB and the NGIB: in 1945, the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR)[3] 'simply ceased to exist' (Sinclair 1990: 284).

Mounting Problems

'It was the indiscipline when out of the line and the relationship of the PNG soldier to the native population that commanded attention' (Mench 1975: 16).

The troubles that arose are worthy of further examination, in part, because ultimately they led to the disbandment of the local military forces. The problems also provide important historical evidence of the nature of local discontent and point to the reasons for unrest among indigenous soldiers decades later. In setting the context for problems in the PIR, it is worth noting that indiscipline among soldiers is not uncommon, particularly in war. Poor discipline can be the result of many factors, including poor leadership, inadequate training, and loss of morale. In war, stress and the constant threat to life compound these problems. Nonetheless, indiscipline in any armed force is a cause for concern.

The troops recruited to the PIB, and later the NGIB, were drawn from different areas of Papua and New Guinea. In the PIB, recruits came mostly from Papua, particularly Gulf, Central and Northern Provinces (See map). Recruits were also drawn from New Guinea, so that in spite of its name, the PIB contained members from outside the region. The PIB practice was to 'place men with similar tribal or village groups in the same section ... to build up a keen spirit of competition ... [and reliance on] fellow tribesmen in times of danger' (Sinclair 1990: 274). The PIB experience 'showed that men from the different parts of Papua New Guinea could live and work together in a relatively harmonious manner' (Mench 1975: 23). The compliment seemed to ignore the constabulary who had achieved the same rapport years earlier.

The effectiveness of local soldiers in battle suggests that the Papuans and New Guineans did develop 'deep ties of friendship and mutual respect' (Sinclair 1990: 274). On the other hand, inter-communal tensions caused trouble between tribal groups. In one early incident, a football match between 'Kerema and

---

[3] The Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) was formed in 1945, incorporating the Battalions of the PIB and the NGIB.

Mambare soldiers ended in a fierce brawl — they were PIB but tribal loyalties ran strong' (ibid.: 168). Not surprisingly, tribal groups had stood together — the reason sections were manned along tribal lines. This PIB approach was abandoned later and a policy of integration adopted in the formation of the NGIB.

In the NGIB, attempts were made to ensure that the new battalion was unique, creating *esprit de corps*. However, in 1944, the transfer of New Guinean non-commissioned ranks from the PIB to the NGIB caused trouble (Sinclair 1990: 215). The replacement of NCO chevrons used in the PIB to denote rank with bar chevrons in the NGIB added further tensions. The troubles which followed, in which Australian officers were attacked, seemed to be the result of deep seated grievances. Local soldiers had already established a history of indiscipline during the New Guinea campaigns. During the Madang-Sepik campaign, for example, there were well authenticated cases of rape, looting, and assault (Mench 1975: 18). At Annanberg, a soldier arrested for the rape of a policeman's wife, was forcibly released by his friends — in contempt of civil authority (ibid.:17). Again, in 1945, soldiers from A Company, NGIB, forcibly freed members of their company under arrest. The soldiers felt 'detention ... did not now apply to them as fighting soldiers' (Long 1963: 262). Collectively, the incidents 'shook official confidence in indigenous infantry battalions' (Sinclair 1990: 273).

Australian commanders, impressed with the performance of the soldiers in battle, and keen to avoid unrest in the ranks while the Japanese presented a threat, explained away the problems. Officials claimed that the New Britain (A Company) incident occurred in large measure because of the exhausted condition of the men who had fought on Bougainville where soldiers of all races found it tiring and debilitating (Long 1963: 262). The PIB did not understand 'the non-progressive warfare' (ibid.: 263) then being fought around the Japanese garrison at Rabaul. Troops should not have been fragmented or placed under troops inexperienced in their handling or control, Long suggested (ibid.: 263), inferring that poor leadership was to blame. PIB officers needed special attributes warranting careful selection for command — a practice used after the PIR reformation in 1951.

By 1945 more problems arose in the PIR. Soldiers were dissatisfied with their pay and conditions (Figure 2.1) which compared invidiously with those of Australian servicemen (Mench 1975: 19). There was justice in the men's grievances — the soldiers were, by this stage of the war, better educated and aware of the difference in the way they were rationed, clothed and treated (Sinclair 1990: 276). But the issue that touched off the most unrest was the granting of a pay rise to the police while PIR soldiers remained on the old scale. Some of the tension was released by giving soldiers a pay rise and a pension but not before serious confrontation between soldiers and police.

Figure 2.1

Pay Scales (Monthly) (Shillings)

		1942	**1945**
Recruit/Year 1 Private		10	20
	Year 2	15	20
	Year 3	20	35
Lance Corporal		25	30
Corporal		30	35
Sergeant		40	50
Warrant Officer		-	80

Pay issues have become a common grievance during the history of the PIR/PNGDF, particularly pay relativity between soldiers and the police. The success of the soldiers in gaining better pay and conditions by using the collective threat of force had shown them that threatened violence could deliver when all else failed. Even when ringleaders were discharged from the PIR, the soldiers stuck to this view. These ringleaders were not always NCOs. Indeed, 'natural leaders were arising, and they were not being recognised' (Sinclair 1990: 276). In later chapters, this issue will be further examined because of the role played by these individuals in transcending tribal boundaries and orchestrating discontent.

The Pacific war profoundly affected the lives of many people in Papua and New Guinea (Nelson 1980: 81), an effect which extended beyond the destruction of property and the loss of life. The people came into contact with large numbers of foreigners. They saw goods and services in unimagined quantities. Infrastructure, including wharves, roads and airstrips, suddenly appeared. They also saw the might of modern armies against which they had few defences. That said, the degree of exposure was uneven. Some Papua New Guineans mostly in the highlands were not touched by the events of 1942-45 (ibid.: 81). Even so, the war experience would play a role in the PIR's reformation in 1951.

Reformation

In 1950, the decision to reform an indigenous military force was the 'result of increasing (Australian) interest in the external and internal security of the region' (Mench 1975: 24). Two issues concerned the Australian government. The potential for Indonesian expansion concentrated the attention of foreign policy and defence planners. The Australian government was not only acting out of concern for its own defence. After 1946, Australia also had a `legal right and responsibility to defend Papua New Guinea' (Sinclair 1992: 44) under the UN trusteeship. Australia was also concerned about the internal stability of PNG. The creation of a military force in PNG would have a role in assisting the civil administration in maintaining law and order (ibid.: 27).

The reformation of a local military force in the 1950s mirrored wider and more dramatic measures being implemented at a territory level by the newly appointed Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck. He identified a need to `encourage building up in the Territory [of Papua and New Guinea], the institutions and the services of government in preparation for the eventual attainment of self government' (Hasluck 1976: 210). Under Hasluck, the Administration focussed on education and health as well as the public service.

Still, the chorus of voices against the formation of a military force remained strong. Some were not impressed with the wartime effort of the PIR, referring to the `uneven performance of the soldiers' (Mench 1975: 14). However, their reputation for `offensive reconnaissance, harassing tasks and

mopping up' (Sinclair 1990: 212) created a niche in Australian defence planning and an important role for the PIR as part of the Australian Army. In the 1950s, the PIR was seen as ideal for `counter-insurgency operations' (Sinclair 1992: 3).

Australia's decision was influenced by the communist threat in Asia and associated insurgent activities, principally in Malaya but later in Vietnam. Australia was also committed to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula. That meant Australian troops were not available for the protection of PNG. So the formation of the PIR went ahead with the reformed unit given the PIR title `as a tribute to the meritorious service of the PIR during the War' (ibid.: 1).

The army was a key element in the development plan for the Territory, and in direct competition with other government agencies for educated locals. In the end, the competition became so great, as a result of the Foot Report,[4] that, to meet its needs, the army began to educate soldiers after enlistment. Education provided soldiers with qualifications and the opportunity to compete for better positions. Importantly, education also prepared soldiers for work outside the army — a contribution to the development of PNG as a nation.

Colonel J.K. Murray (the post-war Administrator) who had `strongly supported the disbandment of the Regiment' (ibid.: 43) in 1945, opposed the reformation. Murray's opposition to local military forces was shared by other former ANGAU officers, who had staffed the pre-war administration of Papua and the mandated territory. People in commerce and on plantations objected as well. Given the PIR's record for unruly behaviour during the Second World War, expatriates still feared that arming the locals would invite trouble. These expatriates, with Colonel Murray, seemed not to see the police as a potential source of the same problems accredited to the local soldiers. Nor did they acknowledge that such a risk might increase if the police force was given substantially increased numbers — a proposal put forward as a substitute for

---

[4] The Foot Commission was the 1962 Visiting UN Mission sent to PNG to examine Australia's colonial administration, in particular, Australia's efforts to prepare PNG for independence. The report criticised Australia's efforts, prompting rapid localisation by departments, which competed for the limited number of educated Papua New Guineans emerging from high schools and, in the late 1960s, from universities.

reforming the PIR. Why, in the face of the outcry, did the Australian government overrule their criticism?

Part of the reason lies in the Australian perception of an expansionist threat from Indonesia. Australia needed to demonstrate a determination to defend Australia and her territories if provoked. Aware that the creation of a local force ran counter to the advice of Australian officials experienced in PNG affairs, and with a view to the documented troubles that arose during the war years, the Defence Department managed the process closely. Orders were issued for the:

- enlistment of recruits on the same numerical basis from Papua, the New Guinea mainland and the (New Guinea) Islands, including Bougainville;
- cessation of tribal segregation in section groups; and
- careful selection of Australian officers appointed to the PIR (Sinclair 1992: 68).

In spite of the policy, tribal balances were to become distorted. In part, this was due to the recruitment of former PIB and NGIB soldiers — mostly Papuans and Islanders — whose experience was valuable in the PIR. For the first few years, the 'Tolai from New Britain and Keremas from the Gulf [formed] the two largest tribal groups' (ibid.: 47). Later, `recruit[ing] equally ... was hindered by financial limits' (Bell 1967: 49). Within a year of its formation, the PIR experienced unrest. In December 1952, Kerema soldiers rioted in support of a soldier arrested by Army police. The incident showed that the `soldiers ... reverted to tribal loyalties under stress' (Sinclair 1992: 51). Knowledge of the incident was limited to the army and quickly forgotten as the Regiment began training in earnest.

The problems dogging the PIR did not disappear for long. In December 1957, soldiers from Taurama Barracks near Port Moresby assaulted a civilian, an act which led to running riots with the police and the public. To make matters worse, soldiers again rioted as the ringleaders were put on trial at Taurama Barracks in a civilian court. Senior defence officers attributed the court

disturbances to poor communications and an error of judgement in holding the court in the barracks.[5] In their opinion, the unrest was not, as some had claimed, `any real defiance of civil administration' (ibid.: 65). Still, the scale of indiscipline shocked Australian officials, including those in the Administration. Percy Chatterton, a witness to the fighting, noted that `voices were raised demanding the Regiment's disbandment' (ibid.: 63).

Such was the outrage that the critics may well have had their way, but the Indonesian threat was sufficient for the PIR to escape disbandment. Even so, the Australian defence hierarchy could not ignore the incident. Policy initiatives were introduced to reassure the administration and the public of the troops' loyalty and that the army was a responsible part of a broader society. The army directed `a much greater emphasis ... on the standard of recruits' (ibid.: 69). Much effort went into improving the army's image as well. The process of selecting good recruits, and enforcing discipline under Australian leadership, sought to ensure a defence force capable of fulfilling its role while abiding by the laws of society.

By 1959, other policies had been introduced. Promotion was based on merit and education rather than, as previously, on four years of completed service. Education was emphasised. The rationale was that better educated soldiers, with the incentive of promotion, were better suited to the Army's role and would raise the standards of the service. The effect of this process was that the use of tribal bigmen — *line bosses* (Bell 1967: 51) — to provide NCO leadership began to decline. Natural leaders were gaining prominence and attracting the respect of the soldiery. If these natural leaders were ignored, they could cause problems.

Even as the character of the PIR changed, reflecting the effect of new policies, another serious incident occurred in Port Moresby in 1961 (Figure 2.2). The trigger was `deep-seated resentment over PIR pay scales' after police pay increased in 1959. A disturbing feature of the 1961 incident was the direct defiance of army authority (Sinclair 1992: 73). Such an act was outrageous to the

---

[5] The convening of a civilian court within the military barracks was criticised as being partly responsible for the subsequent unrest. Nonetheless, the Administration's effort to bring soldiers to account and to deliver sentence was important in maintaining the rule of civil authority.

Army in Australia and unacceptable to the civil administration. No one was prepared to tolerate an undisciplined army and the incident resembled the very scenario about which opponents of a local army had forewarned in 1940 and 1950. Even the Returned Services League defence lobby was critical, calling for a relocation of the PIR on the grounds that the trouble resulted from the wrong contacts[6] (ibid.: 81) — an astute observation with lessons for the future. Most of the PIR unrest has occurred in units based in Port Moresby. Until 2000, soldiers at Lae (Igam Barracks) and Wewak (Moem Barracks) have caused less trouble and where problems have arisen, they have been confined to barrack disturbances.

Figure 2.2

PIR Unrest - 1961

For months the soldiers had been nursing pay grievances arising from deep-seated resentment over PIR pay scales: in July 1959, a pay increase had been granted to the Constabulary; during December 1960, improved conditions for PNG's urban workers were announced, and in January 1961, a new Native Labour Award came into effect. Angry and upset, the soldiers held meetings beginning on 31 December 1960 to discuss pay grievances. European officers were fully aware of the men's feelings, and tried to calm them. On 3 January, at a unit parade, the Commanding officer explained why the pay increases — which were on their way — had been delayed. After the parade, Colonel Norrie placed seven soldiers under arrest for inciting unrest, and moved them to Bomana Gaol in a police van. Seventy soldiers set out on foot towards Bomana, in an attempt to free the seven ringleaders. The troops were finally turned back with the assistance of police. Forty-six were subsequently discharged.[7]

The 1961 incident, not surprisingly, led to a wide-ranging review of the PIR. Canberra had advanced plans for an expansion of the PIR, but that could only be achieved if the discipline problem could be overcome. The Defence Department's investigation of the incident found that:

---

[6] Discipline was undermined by the soldiers' association with urban youth; a problem which increased with the rise of *raskolism* (criminality) from the early 1970s, the tendency to recruit urban rather than rural youth, and with increasing numbers of soldiers living outside the barracks.

[7] For more detail see Sinclair 1992: 73.

- most of those involved were better educated and products of the new policies;
- only sub-units which were regionally dominated defied their officers;
- only five of those involved had been NCOs, the most senior a corporal; and
- the battalion had an exact balance of Papuans and New Guineans.

In the aftermath, consideration was given to the selection of Australian officers for the PIR, including `career streaming' for subsequent duty in PNG. Strict discipline was to be enforced with commanding officers selected for their discipline record. Education levels for soldiers were raised — and soldiers got their overdue pay rise. Consideration was given to `matching of indigenous units with Australian troops' (ibid.: 30). These were important considerations.

The gap was also widening between the senior NCOs and the lower ranks. The `curse of the PIR has [long] been the reluctance of junior NCOs to enforce discipline ... [but] the young educated NCO ... has few compunctions' (Bell 1967: 52). If education did play a role in improving discipline at the lower NCO ranks, the benefit was short-lived. Once soldiers achieved education levels similar to their leaders, the NCOs lost an important advantage. The enforcement of discipline by junior NCOs who were required to live and work with the soldiers on a daily basis, was a problem. The effectiveness of NCOs also depended on good qualifications, personal confidence, and the backing and supervision of senior NCOs and officers. If any of these were missing, the NCO's authority was undermined. In time, authority would come to depend on personal rapport with the section and their acceptance of the NCO as a leader. Above all, the junior leader was expected to be loyal to the group, not to any higher authority. That situation did not augur well for the PIR after independence.

Towards Independence (1962-75)

`The key task ... is to develop a National Army of PNG which will be efficient, well-disciplined, stable, reliable and absolutely loyal to the ... government of the day' (M. Fraser, Minister for the Army: 1968) (Sinclair 1992: 131).

The year 1962, a year after the problems at Taurama Barracks, was 'a turning point in the history of Papua New Guinea' (Hasluck 1976: 374). At the same time, Australia believed that there was a possible threat from Indonesia,

which spurred expansion of the PIR on which PNG's security depended (Ryan 1970: 265). A second battalion (2 PIR) was raised on 3 March 1965. Until 1967, the Indonesian threat provided a sense of purpose and funds for the expansion of the force. The Indonesian threat also prompted the decision to commission Papua New Guineans as PIR officers.

First Officers

`For obvious reasons we need Native officers as soon as we can get them'

(Minister for the Army J.O. Cramer 1962) (ibid.: 266).

Many reasons were behind the decision to appoint, for the first time, Papua New Guineans as officers in the PIR. Papua New Guineans had, in the years since the formation of the PIR, steadily risen within the non-commissioned ranks to the rank of warrant officer. So it seemed a logical progression to start an officer localisation programme. The appointment of local officers would reduce the burden on the Australian Army to staff the PIR, increase army strength in case of trouble with Indonesia, and prepare the PIR for localisation at independence.

By 1963, the decision was made for local cadets to be chosen for the Officer Cadet School, Portsea. In the event, two were selected from the Sogeri High School[8] near Port Moresby — Patterson Lowa and Ted Diro. The programme at the Officer Cadet School (OCS) was intense — both physically and mentally — and designed to provide field officers[9] capable of command at platoon level in twelve months. The experience must have been daunting for Lowa and Diro and it is a tribute to them both that they graduated and rose to senior rank in a defence force which was to undergo major changes in the decade to follow. By December 1963, the two cadets, now commissioned, were posted to Australian units such as the Infantry Centre, 1 Commando Regiment, and the Parachute Training School, where the cadets qualified as parachutists.

---

[8] Sogeri High School was the only PNG high school providing Form 4 education at that time. Graduates from Sogeri High included politicians, senior bureaucrats and military officers as well as businessmen. Friendships (and no doubt enemies) were made during these school days (personal communication Prof. Emeritus J. Griffin of 18 January 1996).

[9] Field officers were those officers holding the rank of Lieutenant, Captain or Major.

Both were to go on to `brilliant careers' (Sinclair 1992: 87). Still, the achievements of Diro and Lowa were due in part to factors which subsequent generations of PNGDF officers did not fully enjoy. Both were able to command with a strong Australian presence in senior non-commissioned and officer ranks in most units. That helped reinforce their authority and build confidence in their command among the rank and file. The soldiers also knew that the local officers had qualified at the same institutions which commissioned Australian officers. Australians still had high representation in 1975 when Lowa resigned from the force. In 1982, when Diro resigned, Australians could still be found in key positions, contributing to the PNG officers' overall performance.

Coinciding with the recruitment of the first officer cadets was the Administration's decision to end prohibition on the sale of alcohol to Papua New Guineans (1 November 1962). This effectively meant that the local commissioned officers, due to return from Portsea in December 1963, would share officer messing facilities with Australians — not so far enjoyed by local non-commissioned soldiers. (Sergeant's messes were segregated to accord with liquor laws.) The full integration which followed the changes to the liquor laws opened many doors for the officers and members of the PIR, including closer relations with Australians serving in the PIR.

As the momentum increased towards independence, the recruitment of officer cadets increased to meet the anticipated needs of an independent army (Appendix 2). Still, the recruitment of officer cadets ignored, at least in the first few years, the standing policy of ensuring wide regional representation in the PIR. The result was that Papuans, and later Islanders, dominated the officer corps for years after independence. That could have had serious consequences had the PNGDF followed the history of many newly independent African states in which the army usurped power through military coups. One of the reasons for the recruitment of Papuans was that their access to education gave them the ability to meet enlistment criteria in those early years. Indeed, most students at Sogeri High were Papuans and Islanders. A concerted effort was made to send representatives of other provinces, including the highlands, to Sogeri but this took time and their

numbers were not reflected in recruiting for several years (personal communication Brigadier-General Noga on 26 July 1996).

Army education was also aimed at qualifying soldiers as cadets. In June 1966, John Sanawe and Gago Mamae were commissioned from this scheme. Two other programmes were established. Officer training began in PNG, in addition to the training at OCS, Portsea (ibid.: 169). By 1971, the first in-service commissioning began. Promising non-commissioned officers were selected, trained as cadets, and commissioned to fill specialist positions in the PNGDF. The first three were Komeng, Malenki and Tavui. When combined with OCS graduates (Appendix 3), the programmes boosted the numbers of local PNGDF officers before independence.

As part of its preparations for independence, the PNGDF established a Joint Services College (JSC) in Lae in 1974 to train cadets of the PNGDF, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) and the Corrective Institutions Service (CIS). The Joint Services College had several advantages for the PNGDF. The cost of training officers was reduced by sharing with the police and the CIS. In addition, local officers could be trained according to local training priorities, albeit with the help of Australian officers. The last PNG cadets to graduate from OCS, Portsea were commissioned in 1973. PNGDF officer cadets would not train at OCS again until 1984[10] — the most notable graduate then was Sam Kauona, a Bougainvillean, who would have a profound effect on PNG history and the PNGDF (See Chapter 7).

The introduction of policies to improve education standards, widen recruiting, enforce stricter discipline, and post the best officers to the PIR, did not reduce indiscipline. Indeed, problems occurred in December 1965, May 1966 and in January 1974. Pay and conditions caused some unrest while longstanding rivalry between the army and the police also led to riots. The onset of independence, appointment of local officers, and the provision of generous

---

[10] The PNGDF recognised that officers benefited from overseas training, especially in Australia (personal communication Brigadier-General K. Noga of 26 July 1996).

resources did not quell unrest in the army. Policy aimed at enforcing discipline at the time called for soldiers to be discharged after three offences.[11]

Nevertheless, in spite of the unrest over pay-related issues, the PIR did not protest over the contentious national pay issue in 1964, when the Administration fixed native public servants' salaries to 40% of those of expatriate officers (Hastings 1976: 113). Later, Michael Somare, as prime minister, noted that there was `no other single issue which made Papua New Guineans more aware of the injustices of colonialism' (Somare 1975: 42). Why did the PIR not add its weight to the protests? Part of the reason was that army pay for local soldiers had, since the war, been set at its own level, below that of Australian servicemen. The other reason was timing. Only months before, the PIR had enjoyed a flow-on pay rise given to the RPNGC. The police pay rise was given to avert a national strike by the police. Indeed, the PIR was on standby as PNG's `law and order [was facing] a complete breakdown for the first time in peacetime history' (Ryan 1970: 269).

The period of PIR expansion from 1963 to 1969 was one of intense activity. Increasing numbers of Papua New Guineans were enlisted and educated. Barracks construction was underway in Port Moresby, Wewak, Vanimo and Lae with Goldie River Barracks the last completed in 1969. The framework of a truly national army had been set up, ensuring retention of the PIR, and the resources to support it, even as people questioned the role of the PIR with Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia coming to an end in 1967 (Sinclair 1992: 107).

As the PNGDF gradually took shape, more training was needed to keep the soldiers occupied. Troops with time on their hands became restive, as evidenced in the early days of the PIB/NGIB in garrison duties. Patrolling programmes, already a regular feature at the border posts, were extended to include other regions of PNG. In part, these were prompted by Australian experience in Malaya and Vietnam. The PNG patrols began `sweeping the length and breadth of PNG ... [with] Papua New Guineans becoming ... aware that they have an Army of their own' (ibid.: 93). The people came to respect the potential force which the Army could yield if called upon by the government. People also

---

[11] Author's experience in the PNGDF 1971-73.

saw first hand the strength of the army compared to the police, the latter mainly represented by small outposts of a few men with limited weapons. Patrolling also had a recruiting dividend with men from diverse tribal backgrounds inspired to enlist. The patrols gave soldiers the opportunity to exhibit their new-found status in their home areas.

Patrols gave the soldiers a sense of purpose and broke the monotony of barracks life. Patrolling also provided 'training in bush techniques, [and gathered] topographic and geographic information [while] winning the hearts and minds of people' (ibid.: 113). By mid-1967, civic action tasks were added to the work carried out by soldiers during patrols (See Chapter 4). Brigadier Hunter[12], influenced by his Vietnam experience, believed that civic action allowed soldiers to `associate and keep in close contact with the people ... , to work side by side with the people, and become identified as part of the community' (ibid.: 114). Troops used their skills to build bridges, schools, and first aid posts as part of the army's contribution to national development. Patrolling was to become an important aspect of PIR life. Indeed, the PNGDF rued the absence of these intangible but widespread benefits in the 1980s as patrolling declined.

The PNGDF became involved in other domestic issues. In 1970, unrest on the Gazelle Peninsula (East New Britain) was taxing the resources of the PNG Constabulary. Large contingents of police had been sent to the Gazelle area. The situation there had deteriorated to the point where the army was called out by the government. Accordingly, both 1 and 2 PIR were placed on standby for deployment (ibid.: 166).[13] In the event, the troops were not required. Still, the incident raised the divisive subject of using the PNGDF in aid to the civil power and the emotive debate of local soldiers firing on unarmed civilians and countrymen. Australian and PNG Army officers believed that the soldiers — well-trained and disciplined — would have no hesitation in using force if ordered to do so. Others were sceptical, claiming that soldiers would be torn between

---

[12] Brigadier Hunter was appointed Commander, PNG Command, in April 1966 (ibid.: 222).
[13] In 1970, Prime Minister Gorton 'ignored the advice of his Minister for Defence and gave the Administrator the authority to call on the PIR to quell a civil disturbance' (Nelson 1972: 207).

tribal customs and military discipline. In that event, soldiers would hesitate and could not be relied upon to fulfil their mission.[14] Others noted that the 'recent use of the police [and standby of the PIR] made them more aware of their collective power' (Nelson 1972: 204). In the Gazelle, the arguments were never tested — that would come in 1985.

The Gazelle issue was important for other reasons. The Mataungan[15] Association emerged among the Tolai people in 1969 (Grosart 1982: 139). Tolais were the `best educated, wealthiest and most advanced of the peoples of Papua New Guinea — not, at first sight, rent-a-crowd material' (ibid.: 143). Many senior NCOs and soldiers were Tolai or from the Islands region. The situation was mirrored in the RPNGC. The incident would therefore have tested PNGDF loyalty if deployment had gone ahead.

As the focus turned to independence, serious consideration was being given to the post-independence role of the army. Some, including Chief Minister Michael Somare (later first prime minister of PNG), believed there must be a `clear separation between the role of the army and police ... with the PIR not ... used ... to preserve internal order' (Sinclair 1992: 173-174). After independence, Somare came around to the view that the army could be used against Papua New Guineans, conceding that `in a real national emergency the government would have to consider calling in the army if the police could not maintain law and order' (Mench 1975: 70). A decade earlier, Paul Hasluck (Australian Minister for the Territories) strongly objected to the use of the army in restoring law and order and, during a state of emergency, maintaining essential services (Hasluck 1976: 406).[16]

---

[14] The PIR officers focussed on likely troop reactions, including from Islander soldiers, but in the end felt confident that the soldiers would obey all orders in the event of trouble (personal communication Brigadier-General Noga, CBE, on 26 July 1996).

[15] *Mataungan* literally means `be alert, watchful, prepared' (Grosart 1982: 142).

[16] Hasluck's principal objection seems to have been his desire for the correct political processes to be followed. He was incensed that the army issued interim orders, which provided for the use of the military in PNG without first securing Cabinet approval (Hasluck 1976: 406).

PNGDF/RPNGC Relations

PNG's decision that there would be a clear separation between the military and the police had advantages. If the relative strength of both forces was the same, each would counter any move by the other to usurp civil authority (e.g. a coup). Interestingly, the prospect that both elements could combine to form a formidable force against the government seems not to have been seriously considered. Perhaps the frequent clashes between members of the two forces convinced people that the prospect of any collaborative effort was remote.

Relations between the army and the police — two of the three uniformed services in PNG (the CIS being the third) — have had an uncomfortable history since 1942. Soldiers considered themselves an elite group within PNG society. For many years, soldiers could point to public criticism of the police as proof of their higher status. Soldiers also knew that the PNGDF would only be called upon to assist the civil authority when the police had failed. So the soldiers had good reason to see themselves as better than the police. Yet soldiers did themselves no service by engaging in running fights with the police in a practice which has now become institutionalised. At independence, the Australian government believed `the key to the future stability and professionalism of the Defence Force lies in the officer corps ... the successful development of [which] will largely depend on the tempo of localisation, [and] the quality of individual senior officers ... ' (ibid.: 155).

A Role for the PNGDF

As part of the Australian Army, and under Canberra's command, the PNGDF in 1975 was very much pro-Australia. Still, the loyalty of the Defence Force at independence to the PNG state — rather than to Australia — was never in question. Nonetheless, local politicians questioned whether control by Australia could be transferred to `smaller and less expert bodies [the PNG government]' (Mediansky 1970: 40). Politicians were also concerned about the threat of military action against the state. That concern underlined their insistence on subordination of the PNGDF to the state; the exclusion of a commander-in-chief; and insistence that the minister for defence would not exercise command of

the PNGDF (Goldring 1978: 53). Provision was made for a tri-partite Defence Council, consisting of the minister, commander and secretary, to be the Defence decision-making structure.

Discussion of the future organisation and role of the PNGDF extended beyond politicians. At seminars in Port Moresby in 1973, the views of military officers, public service advisers and academics were expressed. Overall, there seemed broad support for a separate PNG defence force with a primary focus on external defence.[17] Most differences of opinion arose over the use of the army in any internal security role. Many politicians seemed to agree that the 'existence of a defence force [would] symbolise Papua New Guinea's sovereignty as an independent nation-state' (Mench 1975: 158). However, politicians such as Olewale believed that the PNGDF's `success in integrating the country's ... diverse ethnic groups' (cited in May 1995: 186) would see the army become a super tribe. That prospect reinforced concerns about the potential threat posed by the army in taking action against the government after independence. That possibility underlined the need for the post-independent government in PNG to strive for cohesion, good governance with popular support and a permanent presence in the provinces. Those concerns reflected more a lack of government confidence than any potentially sinister motive on the part of the PNGDF.

Ultimately, under PNG's Constitution, responsibility for command of the PNGDF was vested in the commander rather than in the minister for defence in order to prevent ministerial appointees using the army for political ends. The decision seems to have ignored the possibility that the PNGDF Commander may also have political ambition or could simply support his minister. Some argued that by keeping the army out of internal issues and focussed on external threats, the potential for an army takeover could be further minimised. Fear of the army arose in large part from ignorance about the role and capabilities of the army among PNG's political elite. A concerted effort to expose local politicians to

---

[17] For more discussion see Mench (1975: 72-94).

military training was made to overcome this problem before independence. As well, soldiers were educated on the need for loyalty to the government.[18]

The emphasis given by the Defence Department to forging an accepted place for the PNGDF was in part driven by the sense that many of the early `contributions to the debate on the role of the military ... were almost exclusively anti-military' (Sundhaussen 1973: 34). Local officers shared the same concerns, `conclud[ing] that the Somare government views the army as an unwanted baby' (ibid.: 35). As early as 1972, Somare `sensed the simmering disenchantment [and] embarked ... on a policy of improving ... relations' (ibid.: 35). Somare and his advisers may have recognised that unless suspicions were overcome, the army could be unreliable after independence — as the critics of the army had warned.

As decisions about the role of the PNGDF in the years before independence were being made, one option being considered was to focus the military solely on external defence. That option ignored several important aspects. First, the capacity of the newly-independent government of PNG to afford a large force capable of defending PNG was limited. Even the `maintenance of a brigade of infantry ... would amount to a very considerable charge against the revenues of an independent [Papua] New Guinea' (Hastings 1969: 277). The external option also failed to recognise that the two or three battalions proposed as the PNGDF structure could not defend PNG without foreign assistance. The proposal also ignored the capacity of the civic action programme to keep the soldiers busy, in touch with the population and therefore more likely to accept civilian control.

Eventually, provision was made in the Constitution (Section 203) for an internal security role, enabling the PNGDF to assist the civil authorities in natural disasters and in the restoration of civil order (Goldring 1978: 55). The PNGDF's emphasis on internal security grew after independence, reinforced by its deployment to Bougainville in 1989. The military was an important support for the young democracy.

---

[18] Author's experience in PNGDF 1971-73.

There was also, in my view, a misunderstanding about the role of the PNGDF in internal security. Soldiers were not merely `green' policemen. The aid to the civil power role required soldiers to be used in different capacities to the police — restoring order in the event of a serious breakdown in civil order. Even now, there remains a misconception about the role of the army in call out. The misunderstanding stems from the use of the PNGDF since 1984 to bolster police numbers rather than operating as formed PNGDF units to support the police. The PNGDF's role in aid to the civil power from 1984 led to its overall effectiveness as an instrument of state being eroded (See Chapter 6).

What did Papua New Guineans think of defence issues? Mench (1975: 47) argued that there was `unanimity [of views] amongst Papua New Guineans up until 1966 on the defence policies which the Australian government was pursuing in PNG'. According to Mench (1975: 43), `Papua New Guineans had ... experienced invasion and modern warfare within their own country' and so welcomed a national army. Certainly also, people saw the benefits in an army civic action role, welcoming the PNGDF as they still do in many parts of PNG today. Still, a third of the population had not been affected by the war (Turner 1990: 10). For many of those in rural areas whose contact with the army was limited to relatives recruited to the force or the occasional patrol, there may have been little in their daily lives which would prompt an opinion. For the great majority, a feeling of indifference existed and for others a tendency to see the PNGDF as the trappings of independence. Even then, some believed the resources could better be used in development and could not be justified in terms of PNG's needs (ibid.: 48-49).

By the time the PNGDF came into effect on 26 January 1973,[19] the accelerated promotion of selected officers was already being considered.[20] Some had earlier warned that the `placing of [Papua] New Guineans in positions of authority in the PIR, ... and to increase the pace [of promotion] involved risks'

---

[19] The PNGDF came into effect on 26 January 1973, not as claimed by Sinclair (1992: 230), on the 17 January 1973 (author's experience).

[20] Coinciding with this policy was the sudden outflow of junior Australian Army officers from PNG; the result of the new Labor Government's policy to end conscription.

(Millar 1965: 73). Others saw benefits in accelerated promotion which they argued would give the officer corps experience and a professional ethos (Mediansky 1970: 40). In 1973, with independence approaching, officers were promoted rapidly. Diro was promoted from major in 1971 to Brigadier-General (and Commander) by September 1975 — a period of only four years. These officers would face the difficulty of gaining experience with the added burden of higher responsibility. Those few who achieved senior rank early were so young that they dominated the higher echelons for many years. Graduates saw their promotion prospects blocked by young incumbents in senior posts (Mench 1975: 151).

The decision to grant early promotion unwittingly burdened the PNGDF with an officer corps ill-prepared for the problems which would arise in the years after independence. Friction was created among senior officers who later divided into factions capable of undermining commanders by denying them support. In some instances, the officers would go beyond passive defiance, deliberately reducing the PNGDF's effectiveness. Nowhere was this demonstrated more than on Bougainville in 1989. The decision to recruit officer cadets, initially from Papua and the Islands, created regional imbalances. In 1973, almost 75 per cent of the officers were from the Papuan or Islands regions (See Figure 2.4).

In the lead up to independence, the Australian Army began to localise positions in a deliberate campaign to make the PNGDF self-sufficient. Localisation was rapidly achieved in the PIR (the land element) where the military skills were basic. In technical areas, principally in the Air and Maritime elements, Australians remained in large numbers. With few candidates able to meet the prerequisites and with the high cost of training, localisation in the technical streams was slow. However, in spite of the fragile system, the army outwardly demonstrated the self-sufficiency needed by independence. Even so, the system had no depth. Paul Mench,[21] a major in the PIR in the early 1970s,

---

[21] In 1980, Paul Mench, then Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), was killed in an accidental fall at Lamington National Park.

assessed that rapid localisation produced 'reduced efficiency and even psychological stresses' (1975: 150).

In 1972, the first four recruits with Form 6 (Year 12) education were enlisted. The four represented a bold experiment to produce the first PNGDF pilots. The recruits received a condensed training programme of one month[22] — other recruits trained for six months — before proceeding to officer training at Lae, and later Australia. Two of these recruits were still serving in the PNGDF in 1996. The pilot scheme was important to the PNGDF. The force would depend on air support for operations. The air element focussed on short range aircraft capable of moving an under-strength platoon with equipment into remote areas. The Dakota (DC3) aircraft was a good, if somewhat dated, choice for these operations. Later, other aircraft would be added to the PNGDF inventory. Meanwhile planning was underway to determine the makeup of the post-independent army in Papua New Guinea.

A Fledgling Army (1975 - 80)

`[PNG had] a great national army ... to defend the country and loyally support the government [and] to back up the Constabulary' (Sinclair 1992: 113).

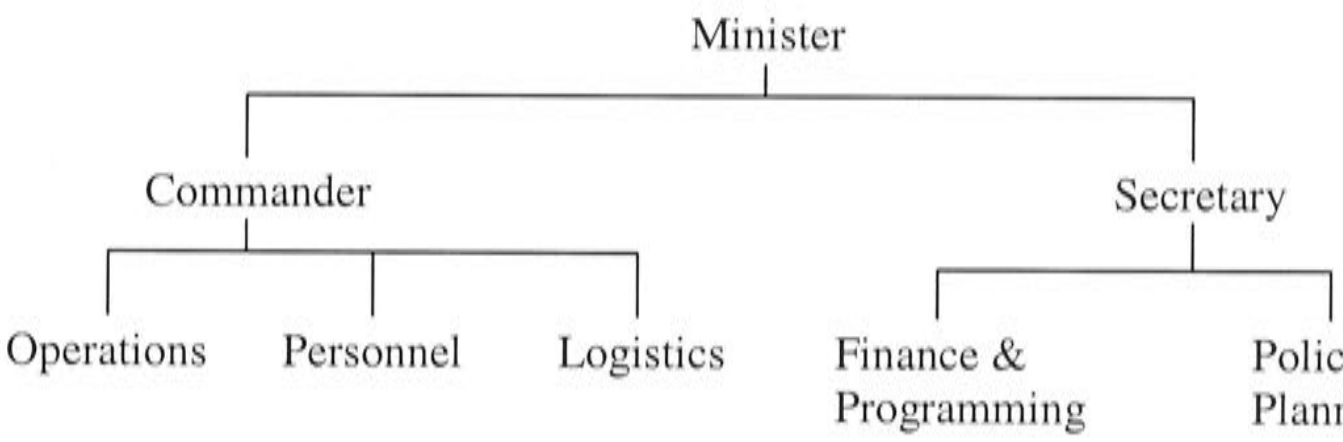
A planning cell had determined the post-independence PNGDF organisation prior to 1975. The principal issue facing the planners was not so much whether the present brigade formation was suited to PNG — changing that would have been expensive and largely symbolic; rather, the structure at the top needed to be determined. Since 1940, Papua New Guinea's military elements had been commanded and administered from Australia. With the transfer of defence powers to PNG in 1975, a government and headquarters structure was required in Port Moresby. The planning cell agreed on the organisation outlined in Figure 2.4. The PNGDF was modelled on a brigade formation with two infantry battalions (1 and 2 PIR), an engineer battalion, and a signal squadron. An air element and a maritime element supported the ground elements (See Sinclair (1992: 179-239). The PNG Constitution defined the PNGDF's role as:

- to defend PNG and its territory;

- to assist in the fulfilment by PNG of its territorial obligations;
- to provide assistance to the civil authorities in:
  - a civil disaster, or
  - the restoration of pubic order and security on being called out in accordance with Section 204 (call-out in aid to the civil power); or
  - accordance with an Act of Parliament during a period of declared emergency under Part X; and
- to perform as directed, functions and services of a civil nature so as to participate in... national development ..., either within the country or outside it, in accordance with this Constitution and Acts of parliament.

Figure 2.3

Defence Organisation - 1975



Papua New Guinea gave close consideration to the division of responsibilities for defence in the government. The CPC wanted no `commander-in-chief in case an occupant might develop authoritarian tendencies ... [Rather] control of the PNGDF was ... vested in the National Executive Council [NEC]'[23] (Turner 1990: 118). In addition, command rested with the PNGDF Commander and not the Minister for Defence (Constitution - Independent State of Papua New Guinea 1975: Section 204).

The conventional use of the brigade formation on the battlefield was not at the forefront of defence thinking at the time. Many defence experts saw the PNGDF largely as a `trip-wire force' (Mench 1975: 163) which was expected to delay an enemy until a larger (Australian) force could be deployed, as had been

---

[22] Author's experience at Goldie River Training Depot as officer in charge of the programme.
[23] In the Constitution, the NEC (cabinet) includes all government ministers (to a maximum of 29).

the case in the war years. Senior officers serving in the PIR believed 'the force should not involve itself in positional warfare ... but should concentrate on ... counter-insurgency type operations' (Sinclair 1992: 86). Quite apart from the PNG considerations, the Australian Army was concentrating on anti-guerilla warfare as part of its training doctrine. Much of this emphasis applied conveniently to the PNGDF. Training therefore tended to be at company level (100-120 soldiers) with most patrols conducted at platoon level (30-34 soldiers). That said, there were instances when the PIR was used in larger numbers, notably in exercises with Australian units.

The PNGDF was an enviable organisation in 1975. Barrack accommodation in all military bases in the country included the latest facilities. The concentration of soldiers in base areas — compared to the RPNGC whose members were deployed in remote stations in small groups — meant that facilities were maintained and visited regularly to instil standards. Soldiers enjoyed good conditions of service, in part influenced by the conditions given to Australian service personnel posted to PNG. Additional leave was given — up to seven weeks per year. Soldiers were provided with free return travel to their village every two years as well as free medical care and three meals per day. Married soldiers received free housing, education and medical care for them and their dependents together with free return travel for families to their village every two years. Such conditions attracted many to the military.

Some chose an army career for themselves, in some cases following relatives who had joined. Others were appointed by the clan and family elders in accordance with custom, to careers in the army (or in the administration, the police or the church). This was particularly true for new recruits drawn from village areas. Selection for the army was a strong incentive to do well. Soldiers `summarily returned to their villages felt they were total failures — shamed' (ibid.: 59). The threat of discharge was a powerful motivator in recruits of the 1960s and the 1970s, helping to maintain discipline. In time, as more recruits were drawn from urban areas and disciplinary action was not followed through, discipline was eroded.

In the field, the soldiers were issued modern ration packs designed for the PNGDF with extra rice and other foodstuffs. Resupply was regular and above all reliable. In the event of an accident, aircraft were available for casualty evacuation. The morale and well-being of the PNGDF soldier was thus maintained into the early years of independence. Soldiers drawn from traditional villages marvelled at the benefits but they did not take them for granted. In time, soldiers recruited from urban areas, and not familiar with the bush, would come to rely on the more comfortable conditions provided in barracks, at times finding it impossible to carry out their tasks in their absence. Problems would then arise.

For those local communities adjacent to military bases, which came to depend on the military for free medical treatment and schooling, the loss of these privileges would have a marked effect. Many were also dependent on the bases for work as `houseboys' (domestics), gardeners and batmen in the messes. The military spawned a network of private sector employment. Mutual support given by the army in services to civilians and by the locals through their labour and the army's access to traditional land, was important. By the 1980s, relations between the soldiers and the locals would sour, leading to unrest over access to land.

Relatives and friends came to share in the benefits through the *wantok*[24] system. Within the barracks, the number of dependents and *wantoks* was strictly controlled before independence for security and safety reasons. These were important considerations. Soldiers were often away for long periods on patrols and it was important for morale and community safety that dependents were safeguarded in their absence. After independence, the controls would be relaxed. As a result, *wantoks* taxed the wages of the soldiers and burdened the defence system with costly expense, particularly medical treatment and rationing.

Tribal representation, which had threatened the viability of the PNGDF in its early history, had been the focus of attention since the troubles of 1957 and 1961. By 1973, proportional representation had changed (Figure 2.4). Since 1942, the proportion of soldiers from the Momase[25] region had declined,

---

[24] A *tokpisin* word meaning, literally, people of the same language group.
[25] Momase is an acronym for **Mo**robe, **Ma**dang and **Se**pik Provinces.

including among officer ranks. Islanders and Papuans had increased in numbers with a marked dominance of these two groups in the officer ranks. About forty per cent of the country's population came from the highlands yet highlanders did not enlist in the PNGDF until after 1957; by 1973 they represented twenty per cent of the army but accounted for only fifteen per cent of the officers.

Figure 2.4

Regional Representation in the PNGDF (%) - 1942, 1945, 1973

(Sinclair 1992: 48, Mench 1975: 131)

	Islands	**Momase**	**Papua**	**Highlands**
(Population)	**(18%)**	**(24%)**	**(20%)**	**(38%)**
1942	15	60	25	-
1945	28	38	34	-
1973	22	28	30	20
Officers				
1973	32	11	42	15

Balanced representation was to remain recruiting policy after independence though numbers were distorted by financial restrictions on recruiting over the years. However, the distortions were not great among regional groupings and the inter-tribal conflict, which characterised the early days of the PIR, was not repeated on the same scale. A principal reason for this was that those problems arose from tribal imbalances rather than regional problems. As representation increased across tribal groups, the friction declined and where problems did exist, they assumed more of a regional dimension.

Since the 1950s, the PNGDF had begun to take on a uniquely PNG appearance. Australia had not introduced Australian Army uniforms for the PIR, in part because of the climatic conditions. Instead, juniper[26] green shorts and shirt were worn in the barracks. The PIR beret was worn proudly by soldiers and by Australians serving with the PIR, rather than Australian slouch hats. Australian field uniforms were worn but with special boots designed for the PIR. PIR

[26] So named because the light green colour resembled Juniper conifer trees.

epaulettes (red and green) further distinguished the PNG soldier. Military custom differed as well. Unlike the Australian Army, soldiers saluted with or without hats and in or out of uniform; a policy introduced to reinforce discipline and promote respect among the rank and file for their officers.

Thus, at independence a framework had been established both for the PNGDF and the part played by the force in the independent state. Members of the force faced a promising future with promotion, posting, job variation, good conditions of service, rewarding service and an active patrolling programme. Some saw the absence of any 'heroic role [played by the army] in the winning of independence' (May 1993: 14) as a disadvantage for the PNGDF. Even so, the soldiers enjoyed a good reputation and the respect of the local population and while there had been instances of unrest in its history, the incidents had been short-lived and isolated. In any event, the PNGDF now had its own officers who were well prepared for command. The PNGDF was ready to fulfil its role under the Constitution should the need arise. In that, Australia had played a key role.

Bilateral Relations

> *'Because strategic matters were an important underlying basis of the relationship between PNG and Australia, defence disengagement was likely to reflect complexities of post-independence relations between the two ...'* (Mench 1975: 53).

Appropriately, 'defence development after 1969 [had] to be placed in the wider context of political change in PNG' (ibid.: 51). The objective was to ensure all government efforts were focussed on preparing PNG for independence. For Defence and other departments, a process of disengagement was adopted (ibid.). The defence assistance programme set up for the post-independence period was designed with that objective in mind. In the event, the process of disengagement or localisation was to fall short of its aims. Within a few years, some PNGDF positions would be delocalised (See Chapter 5).

In the drive to independence, Australia paid particular attention to the strategic implications of the post-independence bilateral relationship. Defence relations, as part of a broader foreign policy, acknowledged that Australia would

continue to support the PNGDF long after independence. The defence assistance programme recognised this commitment. One implication of the programme was that there would be, for many years, Australian service personnel employed in line positions in the PNGDF and as advisers. The aim was to create and maintain a truly independent PNGDF. In that, 'army planning for the future in PNG tended to outstrip the tempo of change in other government sectors' (ibid.: 33).

The success achieved by the Defence Department can also be attributed to the resources given to defence infrastructure in PNG. The barracks and facilities built in PNG were impressive. However, such facilities were out of step with policy of the time which called for a PNG army `based on austere scales of equipment and accommodation suited to the economic resources and stage of development of the country' (ibid.). As a result, problems would become apparent in the 1980s when PNGDF finances and capital works management fell short of the maintenance needs of well-dispersed and expensive military facilities. The defence co-operation programme would be called to account for the declining standards in the PNGDF. The programme would also cause friction in the bilateral relationship with political implications for the Defence budget as PNG politicians cut government spending.

The PNGDF had its own views of the Australian defence role in PNG after independence. Central to their thinking was the belief that defence co-operation represented an ongoing obligation to assist and that assistance was ultimately of greater benefit to Australia than to PNG. Australia, they believed, (following the arguments of Millar 1965: 68), saw PNG as strategically essential. The implication was that the loss of PNG to a hostile power would have serious consequences for the defence of Australia, in effect eroding Australia's ability to defend its territory. That made PNG essential to Australia's strategic interest with its loss posing serious consequences for Australia.

PNG officers did not concern themselves with the subtleties of vital and essential-to-strategic interests. Many PNGDF officers, trained in the 1960s, the era of confrontation with Indonesia, would hold senior positions for many years after independence and their perceptions of defence co-operation influenced

several generations of PNGDF officers. These senior officers grew accustomed to the notion, put forward by Australians, that the PNGDF was their army, that decisions about its future were ultimately theirs while Australia (always) stood ready to assist. Localisation, they were led to believe, was a tangible and accurate indicator of the PNGDF's independence. PNGDF officers would return to these issues time and again whenever they felt threatened by Australia, especially on the issue of defence aid and who had final control over its expenditure — issues which would recur in PNG's national approach on Australian aid in later years.

Independence

By the time Ted Diro was appointed Commander of the PNGDF on 15 September 1975, the day before independence, many Australians had established close bonds with members of the PNGDF as was the case across wide sections of the PNG government. Importantly, even after independence, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) stood ready through mutual agreement to assist when required. The climate had been created for the PNGDF to develop independently, according to PNG's national goals. Yet, the challenges for the PNGDF began before independence. The Gazelle unrest has already been mentioned. Two threats of secession materialised in the year of independence.

In March 1975, *Papua Besena*[27] unilaterally declared independence only months before PNG achieved independence. In the event, the declaration amounted to no more than a `symbolic protest' (Hegarty 1983: 4). The incident shook the Somare government, but the PNGDF was not needed. In September, only weeks before PNG's independence day, secessionist stirrings on Bougainville tested the government again. The Somare government defused the issue by agreeing to a system of provincial governments. Bougainvillean support

---

[27] The Papuan separatist movement — *Papua Besena* — had 'two central themes: a belief that Papua was being neglected in the area of economic development, and a reaction against migration from New Guinea to Port Moresby' (McKillop 1982: 330).

for a united PNG was enlisted on the understanding that Bougainvilleans would have a say in the running of the province.[28] Again, the PNGDF was not needed.

A third issue which tested the government, and which had defence implications, was the management of the PNG/Indonesian border. OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) (Free Papua Movement) rebels in the border area irritated the Indonesians who were further nettled by sympathy 'within the PNG elite ... [to] the Melanesian brothers' cause in Irian Jaya' (Hegarty 1983: 4). PNGDF border patrols were more to counter Indonesian enthusiasm for hot pursuit patrols in search of the OPM than to restrict rebel activities on the border. Each patrol had the potential to result in a border clash and so threaten bilateral relations. Notwithstanding border tensions, problems were held in check.

The PNGDF was seen as an important instrument of state in PNG. Yet, in the absence of good relations with the government, the Force could also be used for military intervention. Such intervention could have been justified by the PNGDF on the basis that soldiers were acting as guardians of the people and guarantors of democracy in PNG. Many believed that the PNGDF's principal role would be internal security because `as a small state [PNG] cannot ensure its security by military means' (ibid.: 160). That assessment reflected the practical realities of the small size of the PNGDF (around 3000) and the difficulties of defending PNG's geographic area. Mench (1975: 176) argued that the PNGDF's success in any internal security role depended on its relationship with the people, and on retaining a monopoly of violence. In the internal security role, PNGDF intervention would put at risk its relationship with the people, creating `an important and potentially destabilising precedent' (ibid.: 169) — a prophecy borne out in the 1980s after the army was used in aid to the civil power.

Even in the early post-independence years, relations between the PNGDF and the government became strained. In 1977, Cabinet reprimanded Brigadier-General Diro for his unauthorised meeting with an OPM commander (Dorney

---

[28] In 1988, Bougainvillean secessionists blamed the unrest on Port Moresby's failure to allow Bougainvilleans a say in the running of their affairs. In 1995, following reform of the Organic Law on provincial government, Bougainvilleans argued that with the conditions under which they agreed to be part of PNG now changed, they were no longer bound by the 1975 agreement.

1990: 200). (Diro had sought the meeting because of credible reports that the OPM was planning to attack the then Governor-General, visiting the northern border area at the time. [Discussion Brig-Gen Diro of 6 March 2002].) At the time, Diro believed he was acting in the national interest, though he seems to have given scant regard to Indonesian reaction to his actions. The government, with problems of its own, saw the need to reaffirm its authority over the army. For Prime Minister Somare, disciplinary action was justified.[29] He was unaware that the PNGDF had prepared a contingency plan (Operation *Electric Shock*) to demonstrate the extent of the army's power if the government sacked Diro. In the event, Diro was not sacked and the army did not act.

Speculation has surrounded the existence of the plan. Some sceptics have said that the plan did not exist and that the idea of PNGDF action against the state was largely contrived by Lieutenant Colonel Poang, then Commanding Officer, 1 PIR. Still others reject the notion because they claim Diro knew nothing of the plot. Certainly, the suggestion of the PNGDF acting against the state seemed out of character at the time. The Force had a good public image and a reputation for high professional standards. Nonetheless, Operation *Electric Shock* was a standing plan complete with specific but limited objectives. The First Battalion, based at Taurama Barracks, developed and was to carry out the plan. The operation was not designed to usurp power, which, in the minds of the soldiers, tempered the seriousness of what was being plotted. Rather, the PNGDF saw the action as a show of strength designed to safeguard Defence interests without long-term damage to democracy in PNG (personal communication Brigadier-General Lokinap, CBE of 17 April 1996).

The naivety of the PNGDF thinking is cause for concern. No account seems to have been taken of the potential for conflict with the police. The Army placed confidence in the advantage of surprise, confusion and its superior firepower. Nor did the PNGDF appreciate the backlash from the population or

---

[29] *Papua Besena* leader, Josephine Abaijah, tried to use the Diro incident to advantage by claiming that 'the government was conducting a smear campaign over the Diro affair ... based on [its] fears and insecurity when dealing with Papuans' (quoted in McKillop 1982: 347) — however she achieved little.

the potential risks of foreign intervention. As the plan did not go ahead, the belief that many soldiers would have refused to participate was not tested. The failure of the government to take action established within the PNGDF a belief that such action was an ongoing safeguard for their interests. The concept of *Electric Shock* would remain alive in the PNGDF for later years.

The issue was an indictment of Diro's leadership. Diro should have known of the plot. The takeover was rehearsed in the barracks and knowledge of the plan had been leaked to other elements of the PNGDF. Yet Diro claims he only became aware of the plan after the reprimand. Once exposed, he replaced Lieutenant Colonel Poang, arguing `that any action against the government was the prerogative of the commander only not that of his subordinates' (discussion Brig-Gen Diro of 6 March 2002). Diro did not disclose details of the plot to the government in order to avoid undermining government confidence in the PNGDF. Rather, he chose the more difficult course of disciplining subordinates who were acting out of loyalty. Diro, in accepting the government's reprimand, reinforced the army's subordination to the civil authority. Earlier, in 1974, Diro, then a Lieutenant Colonel, had reminded graduating recruits at Goldie River:

> As soldiers, your task is quite clear — to give your absolute ... loyalty to the government ... [this] must be paramount in your minds (Sinclair 1992: 241).

Notwithstanding the clash with government, command of the PNGDF was to remain with Ted Diro until 1981 in spite of two national elections (1977 and 1982), and a successful vote of no confidence — PNG's first.[30] The retention of Diro for so long a period is noteworthy, particularly given the frequency with which subsequent commanders were replaced. Commanders of the PNGDF and their periods of appointment are shown in Appendix 4.

Apart from the 1977 incident, predictions that the PNGDF would challenge government authority, as many armies of newly-independent African states had done, proved to be unfounded. Indeed, the `low profile of the military in Papua New Guinea [in the first decade after independence] is one of the country's many political surprises' (Turner 1990: 118). Part of the reason can be

attributed to the Australian presence in the PNGDF after independence. Another factor was that the economic and political climate remained favourable to the Somare government for the first eighteen months after independence (Hegarty 1983: 2). The stability created a confident army/government relationship.

The harmony within government was not destined to last. The first real test of government came in 1979 when the then Justice Minister, Nahau Rooney, sought to influence the judiciary. After she was charged with contempt and jailed, Somare, who had assumed the minister's portfolio, used his discretionary power to release her from jail (Nonggorr 1993: 4). Public pressure defused the issue. At no time was there threat of army intervention. Nor was there any threat of intervention when a vote of no confidence saw the Somare government replaced by Sir Julius Chan in 1980. Both events had the potential to cause problems for the newly-independent PNG and provoke PNGDF intervention. Were there other factors, which influenced the PNGDF against taking action?

The army was adjusting to its independent status and influenced by the focus of pre-colonial times — patrolling and civic action. The PNGDF had not yet been involved in law and order beyond the alert over the Gazelle in 1970. Soldiers also continued to enjoy good conditions of service and the PNGDF's public image was good. Although localisation was advanced, many Australians remained in the force, providing a framework of discipline (personal communication Brigadier-General Lokinap, CBE, of 17 April 1996).

The PNGDF leadership was stable and Brigadier-General Diro and other senior Papua New Guinean officers were respected — a recognition of their training and experience which was not matched by younger officers. Senior officers were not frustrated in any ambitions they had for power. Paterson Lowa had resigned from the army (on Diro's appointment as commander) to pursue a political career. Diro would follow the same path in the 1980s. The ability to achieve power through other means helped defuse any inclination to use the army to achieve personal goals during the early post-independence years. The PNGDF

---

[30] A Chan/Okuk coalition replaced the Somare government in a vote of no confidence in 1980.

enjoyed a clearly defined role with no conflict between the force and the government over policy issues.

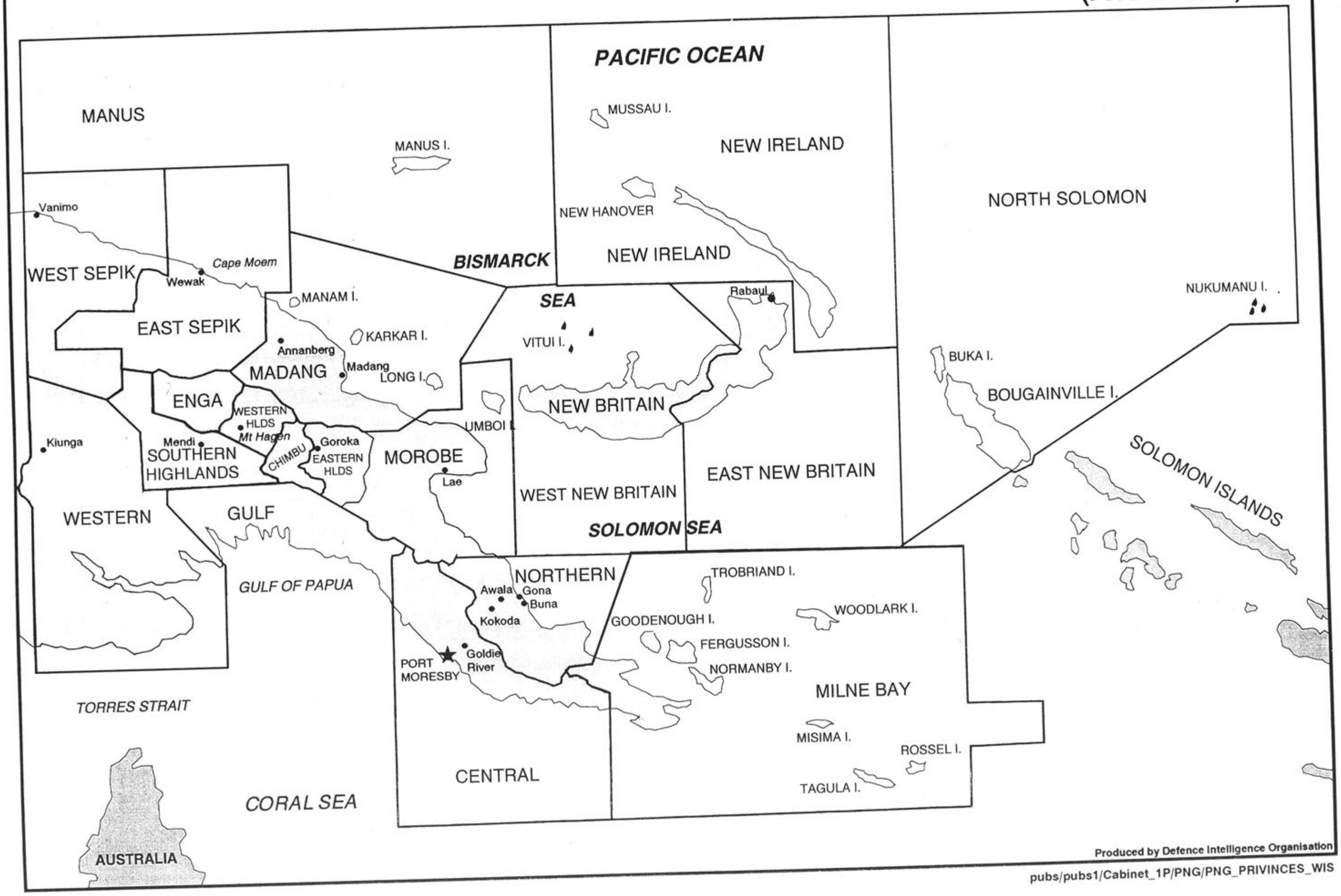
Conclusion

The early history of the PNGDF highlights issues which would become important in the post-independence period. Indiscipline had been a key issue. Critics pointed to the unrest brought about by poor army/ police relations and soldiers aggrieved by pay and conditions of service. Those concerns were not allayed even when policy decisions, designed to reduce the incidence of unrest, were implemented. For example, soldiers were organised into sections based on tribal groupings during the Second World War. That was later abandoned in favour of integration. In both instances acts of indiscipline continued, even under the command of Australian, and later, local officers and NCOs.

Strict disciplinary measures and improved education had some positive effect on discipline, reducing the frequency of disciplinary breaches. However, the PNGDF soldier still seemed prepared to discard discipline when the mood took him. Tribal imbalances, including in officer ranks, which favoured Papuans and Islanders, added to the tension. By addressing the imbalances, the focus of indiscipline changed from inter-tribal friction within the army to unrest between the army and outsiders, including the police.

Recruitment of local officers had come late and limited numbers further reduced the effectiveness of localisation. Problems were compounded when promotion was accelerated for independence. The NCOs on whom young officers depended for support and for their development, also lacked a commitment to discipline. The widening gap between younger and better educated NCOs and the older, more traditional NCOs presented problems for the young army. Yet the PNGDF only once showed any inclination to act against the government (in 1977). The army's promising record in the early years after independence can be attributed to its non-participation in civil disorder and the Australian presence. As an institution, the PNGDF was a strong instrument of state. The first call for its use would come from abroad rather than from within PNG. Problems were emerging in Vanuatu.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PROVINCES)



Produced by Defence Intelligence Organisation

pubs/pubs1/Cabinet_1P/PNG/PNG_PRIVINCES_WIS

Appendix 2 to
Chapter 2

Advertisement for Local Officers[31]

(Granter 1970: 23)

OFFICER CAREERS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

If you have got what it takes, you can make for yourself a brilliant career and gain promotion to the highest Army posts. This is the challenge the Army is offering to the best young men in Papua New Guinea.

- If you have reached the age of 17 years.
- Have a minimum of Form IV (Territory) or equivalent education.

Obtain further information about the career opportunities for officers in the Army in Papua and New Guinea, together with application forms for Officer Cadet School entry, please contact:

- Army Careers Officer

  Headquarters Papua New Guinea Command

  Murray Barracks Free Bag

  Boroko Papua

---

[31] The officer shown is Tom Nauna.

Appendix 3 to
Chapter 2

PNG Officers—Graduates of OCS 1962-1975[32]

T. Diro	1963	D. Yangimas[33]	1970	G. Cooper	1972
P. Lowa	1963	J. Bau[34]	1970	G. Key	1972
K. Noga	1964	J. Koaba-Bure	1970	J. Apa	1972
K. Guria	1965	G. Iruru	1970	A. Misirait	1972
T. Nauna	1966	C. Baulten	1971	U. Ukengo	1972
G. Mamae	1968	M. Toverbae	1971	J. Mule	1972
L. Dotaona	1968	P. Dala	1971	N. Kuwoh	1973
T. Poang	1968	A. Druen	1971	F. Moripi	1973
J. Sanawe	1968	S. Maiasa	1971	W. Salamas	1973
A. Huai	1968	B. Tasia	1971	M. Taeni	1973
T. Niaga	1969	B. Kavanamur	1972	G. Wiri	1973
M. Kiso	1969	M. Pohunu	1972	M. Kuwek	1973
R. Tarupiu	1969	B. Eka	1972	M. Nelson	1973
P. Soma	1969	F. Kiriba	1972	J. Pais	1973
J. Kassman	1969	G. Haurama	1972	A. Pinia	1973
N. Noke	1969	V. Mae	1972	G. Tamegal	1973
L. Nuia	1970	M. Inia	1972		
R. Dademo	1970	Z. Kukuma	1972		
D. Josiah	1970	A. Trongat	1972		
W. Maule	1970	M. Reu	1972		

---

[32] The list does not include Lieutenants Tau (killed in a car accident) and Brawa (killed in a tribal payback attack) or officers commissioned from in-service courses.
[33] Yangimas later changed his name to Takendu.
[34] Bau later changed his name to Bau Maras.

Appendix 4 to
Chapter 2

Commanders of the PNGDF

Brigadier-General T. Diro, CBE	1975 – 1981
Brigadier-General G. Mamae, CBE	1981 – 1983
Brigadier-General K. Noga, CBE	1983 – 1985
Brigadier-General T. Huai, CBE[35]	1985 – 1987
Brigadier-General R. Lokinap, CBE, LVO[36]	1987 – 1992
Brigadier-General R. Dademo, OBE	1992 – 1993
Brigadier-General T. Huai, CBE	1993 – 1995
Brigadier-General J. Singirok, MBE	1995 – 1997
Brigadier-General L. Nuia, OBE	1997 – 1998
Brigadier-General G. Singirok, MBE[37]	1998 - 1999

[35] Brigadier-General Huai's appointment in 1985 and again in 1994 is notable for two reasons: he was the first non-serving individual appointed as commander, having resigned in 1984 and in 1987, and he was the first of only two officers appointed twice as commander.
[36] Brigadier-General Lokinap was stood down from February to September 1989 pending a Board of Inquiry into the PNGDF pay riots on 8 February 1989 (see Chapter 5).
[37] Singirok was promoted to Major-General on 9 Jun 99 when the position was upgraded.

Chapter 3

Vanuatu

`[The PNGDF's] highly professional, though restrained, operations, speedily brought [the unrest] under control with a minimum of casualties on both sides'

(East 1981: 69).

Introduction

By the 1980s, the PNGDF had assumed much of the responsibility for the daily conduct of defence activities. Australians made up less than 4 per cent of the Force, holding 141 PNGDF positions in 1980 (Defence Report January 1995: 6.1). Brigadier-General Diro had held the Commander's appointment for five years, surviving the strain in relations arising from the government's public dressing down in 1977 (See Chapter 2). Under Diro, the PNGDF had maintained a level of military proficiency through border patrols, unit exercises and civic action. These were all integral parts of the army's training schedule. The proficiency extended to both internal security and counter insurgency operations (CIO). These would be important elements in the PNGDF's first major test, putting down a secessionist revolt in Vanuatu later in 1980. In that, Diro would play a leading role in international diplomacy, which would eventually lead to PNG parliamentary approval for a PNGDF deployment.

The Vanuatu operation gave the Force a timely focus. Soldiers had been routinely involved in border operations but, until 1980, the independent army had not faced any real test of its capabilities. Few opportunities had arisen aside from calls by some politicians for the army to be used to restore order in the Highlands. The officer corps had been frustrated by poor promotion prospects. After the initial flurry of promotions in the run up to independence, many of the senior officers expected to remain in their positions for some time (See Chapter 2). The Vanuatu operation gave a timely boost to military morale.

Background

The Republic of Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) is an archipelago of 80 islands, covering 12,000 square kilometres (See map at Appendix 1). The capital, Port Vila, is located on the island of Efate. The other main islands of

Vanuatu include Santo, Tanna, Malekula and Erromango. Santo is the largest island in Vanuatu. The population at the time of the rebellion in 1980 was 110,000. The national language — *Bislama* — is a form of Pidgin English similar to Papua New Guinean *Tokpisin*.

Prior to independence, the New Hebrides had been governed, since 1906, by an Anglo-French administration, established under a New Hebrides Convention. The Administration has been referred to as a 'systemised process of separate Frenchisation and Britishisation of the New Hebridean peoples' (Gubb 1994: 4/5). The administrative arrangements were confusing to the local people. The two colonial powers opposed each other on the issue of independence. For its part, Britain favoured independence. France, however, pursued a policy of stalling moves towards independence trying to build up a francophone majority (Shears 1980: 48). In spite of French stonewalling, independence, on 31 July 1980, was eventually agreed. The unrest which marred Vanuatu's transition to statehood, did not stem from the denial of independence by the administering powers; rather, friction among the peoples of the New Hebrides stemmed from the uneasy alliance between the French and the British.

A Call for Help

The problems, which came to a head in 1980, had their roots in the nationalist undercurrents, which emerged in the 1960s, especially in the formation of the Nagriamel movement.[38] The movement had been influenced by the cargo cults which emerged after the Second World War (Beasant 1984: 15). Nagriamel support was concentrated on Santo Island with part of its support base drawn from the Vemarana movement whose members were strongly opposed to the anglophone Vanuaaku Party (VP)-led government.

The Nagriamel movement's leader, Jimmy Stevens, exploited popular support for traditional ways, which emphasised the central importance of land. In that, the members of Nagriamel were in conflict with the European settlers. If the rebels had their way, the settlers would have been unable to secure more land from the local people. Meanwhile, some Europeans and American interest groups

---

[38] For more detail see Beasant (1984: 17-19).

recognised the opportunity to pursue their own political and religious agendas in the region. One such group, the Phoenix Foundation, had earlier encouraged secession in the Bahamas (Shears 1980: 42). The Foundation provided financial support to Stevens as well as constitutional advice, radio equipment and arms (ibid.: 42). The Foundation, Vemarana members, and the cargo cultists exploited Steven's influence (Scarr 1990: 330).

The New Hebrides National Party (NHNP), which had been formed in 1971, dominated the Assembly, frustrating Nagriamel members in their attempt to secure power, as independence approached. The party became a popular alternative to the largely francophone Nagriamel group, creating friction within the New Hebrides. While NHNP leader, Walter Lini, recognised in 1979 the risk of internal unrest, his attempts to reconcile differences failed. Lini had hoped that by talking directly with the rebels, he could reach a compromise (Shears 1980: 71). Lini, together with members of his cabinet, visited Santo in April 1979 and met with Stevens. But Stevens misread Lini, believing he had been given Lini's acceptance of Santo's independence. Stevens was already planning independence for Santo — the Republic of Vemarana — even preparing a constitution. The French landowners, at first suspicious of Nagriamel, were placated by Stevens, who made provision in the draft constitution for European ownership of land (ibid.: 70). With land ownership apparently secure under Stevens, Europeans saw advantage in supporting the rebels. That support drew criticism from Lini and others. Ultimately, in opting for a military solution to the unrest, Lini's decision would run the risk of French military action.

The French government's concern over events in the New Hebrides and their potential to threaten French citizens there was understandable. Lini's close association with Anglophone connections did little to endear him to the French. When, in 1980, Lini proposed emergency powers to restore order, France opposed his request. Diplomatic wrangling between the British and French over the latter's refusal to form a combined force to restore order, and French sanctions over the British troop presence, further clouded relations. On 29 July, the French deputy foreign minister guaranteed `protection for all French ... on Santo ... even

after independence [promising to] defend them with the utmost vigour' (Gubb 1994: 25), fuelling Lini's suspicions that the French were aiding the rebellion.

The problems in the New Hebrides had already caught the attention of the PNGDF. Intelligence assessments of the internal problems in the New Hebrides were prepared in late 1979 (discussion Brigadier-General Huai 30 May 1995). PNG added its diplomatic voice to Lini's condemnation of France `protesting formally over the continued inflammatory involvement of French citizens in the affairs of Vanuatu' (*Pacific Islands Monthly,* October 1980: 5).

With the British unprepared to commit their troops in the face of French opposition, and both sides reluctant to respond to his call for military assistance, Lini looked elsewhere. He first approached the United Nations before trying once more to stir the Condominium powers into action. European indecision, French reluctance to use force against its own citizens, and the prohibitive cost of a large British deployment (ibid.: 16) left the door open for PNG's intervention.

During a visit to Port Vila in mid-July, Brigadier-General Diro discussed the possibilities of PNGDF assistance with Lini (Beasant 1984: 120). The visit, after Lini's earlier approaches to Somare (in March) and Chan (in June), was designed to assess the situation for the PNG government. In choosing to send Diro, Chan may have inadvertently committed PNG to supporting the Lini government. Diro had made no secret of his desire to deploy PNG troops to Vanuatu. As the PNG envoy, he had the opportunity to cement the commitment. The role of PNG Foreign Affairs representatives is not altogether clear; the department suffered from a lack of permanent representation in Vanuatu. Predictably, Diro carried Lini's request for military assistance to Port Moresby.

Any doubts about the use of the PNGDF which Lini may have harboured were probably allayed by Diro's preparedness to place a PNGDF contingent under the guidance of the Vanuatu National Security Committee (ibid.: 125). Lini therefore accepted PNG's tentative offer of assistance.

Prime Minister Chan was worried about the prospective political fallout from PNGDF casualties. He also questioned the PNGDF's capacity to put down the rebellion — mindful of French and British reluctance to become involved.

Some of Chan's caution came as a result of Australian diplomacy that emphasised the risks of using PNGDF troops who were inexperienced in combat. Chan also recognised the risks of deploying a foreign army into an imbroglio with many vested interests. Nevertheless, at a South Pacific Forum meeting in Tarawa on 14 July 1980, Chan announced his willingness to commit troops to Vanuatu — conditional on a personal assessment by Brigadier-General Diro.

Under PNG's Constitution, the deployment of the PNGDF abroad required the approval of parliament (Goldring 1978: 56). The Governor-General recalled parliament on 25 July to `consider legislation authorising the deployment of the PNGDF' (Beasant 1984: 122). The Opposition opposed the deployment, arguing that PNG had the `biggest law and order problem in the entire Pacific area' (PNG National Parliament Hansard 7 August 1980: 22). The troops, argued the Opposition, could be better used against this threat than in assisting Vanuatu with its secessionist problems. Public opinion was less easily measured. Many in PNG had a poor understanding of the political situation in Vanuatu, especially of the risks involved in deploying troops there. Eventually, however, Chan mustered support to pass the Defence Forces (Presence Abroad) Bill on 7 August, by fifty-five votes to forty.

Lini understood that Chan favoured a regional peacekeeping force even before the Vanuatu troubles. Lini in effect gave Chan the opportunity to demonstrate the value of such a force to the region. Lini also knew that among the island countries, `Papua New Guinea had the largest forces[39] and a ... capacity to move quickly' (Gubb 1994: 23), though that capacity depended in large part on Australian logistic support and on Australian Defence personnel serving in the PNGDF at the time.

The crisis could have been defused on several occasions before the PNGDF deployment. The forces arrayed against the rebel elements were formidable. British and French troops did not intervene but remained garrisoned in the area. For a time, the foreign troops, especially the French, posed potential

---

[39] The Fiji Military Force (FMF) with around the same strength had a battalion committed to UN duties. That would have prevented its participation.

difficulties for the *Kumul* Force deployed to restore order. Many were uncertain of the French reaction to the *Kumul* deployment, given the French undertaking to defend French rights. Australia also recognised the risks, prompting caution in committing ADF personnel and urging restraint on the part of the PNG government. Nonetheless, the deployment went ahead.

Planning the Deployment

PNGDF soldiers deployed to Vanuatu on 29 July, not for operations but for independence celebrations. They were part of A Company, 1 PIR and comprised 120 men, including 30 PIR bandsmen. Being based at Taurama Barracks, they could be readied for deployment quickly. B Company 2 PIR had been in Port Moresby at the time of the warning order for the deployment, as part of a Trooping of the Colour ceremony; they hastily returned to Wewak for equipment, and deployed to Vanuatu on the day Parliament gave its approval.

Diro was conscious that Chan harboured doubts about the PNGDF's capacity to put down the rebellion, and set about convincing Chan that every measure had been taken to ensure success. Diro emphasised that the members of the *Kumul* Force were specially selected. He also claimed that `each unit was put through rigid battle indoctrination ... bringing the force into battle efficiency' (Dorney 1990: 190). The rigid training was in reality a short exercise — codenamed *Kumul 1* — undertaken in Milne Bay for some of the troops before the deployment. The exercise was hastily planned and of short duration because there was little time remaining before deployment. The exercise revealed serious communications and logistics problems (discussion Brigadier-General Huai of 30 May 1995) which did not augur well for troops operating in Vanuatu. A longer exercise would have exposed the PNGDF's inherent weaknesses. Moreover, the soldiers exercised among a population friendly to the PNGDF, an advantage which could not be guaranteed in Vanuatu.

Diro accompanied the advance troops to Vanuatu, in order to participate in the independence celebrations. He appointed Lieutenant Colonel Tony Huai as Commander of the *Kumul* Force. Huai, who prior to the deployment was Chief of

Operations (COPS) at Headquarters, PNGDF, arrived with the second element of the contingent on 18 August. Huai was promoted to Colonel a month later.

The appointment of the Chief of Operations to command the *Kumul* Force is noteworthy. The appointment meant the absence, for the duration of the deployment, of a key senior officer from the headquarters to command a force with a total strength of less than half a battalion. Such a group was routinely commanded by a lieutenant colonel, usually a battalion commander. The selection of Lieutenant Colonel Huai from Headquarters PNGDF, rather than one of the two commanding officers of the PIR, raises doubt about the degree of confidence Diro had in the commanding officers of the two battalions.[40] Under the PNGDF command structure, there was no provision for a forward commander. Any deployment, internal or external, demanded that the chief of operations oversee at headquarters all aspects of the operation. The chief of operations was too important a position to be left to subordinates while troops were deployed on active service. Yet this problem was not addressed even in the aftermath of Vanuatu. The same problem emerged on Bougainville when Colonel Nuia, then chief of operations, was appointed deputy controller (See Chapter 7).

The appointment of an officer from outside the battalions also added uncertainty to the contingent's effectiveness. The selection of the two companies was prompted by the Commander's desire to use the best company of each Battalion; he may have planned also to deploy the two companies to separate areas of operation. As it was, the two companies were from different battalions with little experience working together, especially on operations. The PIR battalions had been very different, even from the early days. To combine two companies at short notice and expect them to work together was far from ideal. A more serious and sustained rebel threat would have exposed command and control problems inherent in the *ad hoc* formation of the *Kumul* Force.

---

[40] Huai was appointed due to the short time before deployment (discussion Brigadier-General Nuia of 12 July 1999).

Rules of Engagement

Prior to the deployment, the *Kumul* Force was issued with rules of engagement, which set down guidelines for the use of weapons during the operations. Such rules are an integral part of internal security operations. They are designed to reinforce soldiers' responsibilities for the use of minimum force and to assist them to understand the conditions under which they may return fire, especially in circumstances involving civilians. Rules of engagement recognise the difficulties faced by military personnel operating in an internal security role.

Soldiers deployed to Vanuatu were instructed to fire only if fired upon or in the event that they reasonably expected a threat to their safety or to the safety of others. Ultimately, they were instructed that the decision to fire would need to withstand scrutiny by a court if the situation arose. Soldiers were also informed that return fire must be directed at the threat and then only sufficient to neutralise the threat. Indiscriminate and concentrated fire was forbidden.

For the most part, soldiers abided by the rules of engagement. Contacts with the rebels did occur though these were limited in number. That reduced the instance of indiscriminate fire and, with it, the potential for civilian casualties. Another important factor influenced the conduct of soldiers. At the time, infantry soldiers carried the 7.62mm Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) which was not capable of automatic fire. Soldiers therefore tended to fire only aimed, single shots rather than the high volume scattered fire which became a characteristic of PNGDF responses on Bougainville in the late 1980s.

Notwithstanding the rules of engagement, sailors on board the HMPNGS *Madang* fired 40mm Bofors cannon indiscriminately at Matanas village, Wide Bay, after a soldier in a landing party was shot by rebels. Fortunately, both the rebels and local villagers escaped injury in the incident.

While the *Kumul* Force busied itself with preparations for operations in Vanuatu, Australian diplomatic activity, prompted by the proposed PNGDF deployment and the prospect of internal unrest in Vanuatu, began in earnest.

Politics and Diplomacy

Australia was concerned at the possible implications — especially for Australia — of PNG military assistance in Vanuatu. The defence and foreign policy dimensions ensured Australian government interest in PNG's commitment. The likely reaction of foreign countries, especially those with principal interests in Vanuatu, and the safety of Australians then in Vanuatu were the focus of government assessment. A pressing problem was the extent to which Australian defence personnel might be involved in the operation or in contingency measures in the event that the situation deteriorated. Australia had long been concerned about the prospect of ADF personnel being drawn into clashes which could ultimately bring Australia into conflict with regional countries, especially Indonesia, through the actions of PNG forces. That prompted action by Australia in 1977 to ensure its control over ADF personnel attached to the PNGDF.

Australia set down policy guidelines in 1977 that governed the use of ADF personnel in politically sensitive situations (Gubb 1994: 31) (See Chapter 5). The Australian government was keen to ensure that ADF personnel did not become involved in operations, especially in an internal security role. As a result, ADF personnel, for example, pilots and technical staff, were withdrawn from duty. The decision on the eve of the deployment created a rift in PNGDF/ADF relations, which would see a deterioration in relations for the remainder of the decade (discussion Brig-Gen Diro of 6 March 2002). The Vanuatu deployment presented a dilemma for Australia because of the risks of ADF casualties or the ADF being called upon by PNG to support its troops on the ground. The potential problems ensured close consultation between the Department of Defence and Department of Foreign Affairs. The outcome was that Australian agreement to support the deployment was made contingent upon liaison between the PNGDF and the ADF, and adherence to the 1977 guidelines. In the event, the two forces combined well, contributing to the operation's overall success.

The Vanuatu deployment was also a litmus test of Australian efforts to build a viable defence capacity in Papua New Guinea. Australia emphasised, in

its defence objectives in PNG, a capacity for self-reliance, and an ability to deter aggression and to protect PNG's national resources.

Australian policy on PNG was influenced in part by its view of the region through a `cold war lens' (ibid.: 28). Australia saw the need to limit opportunities for communist states and other interest groups to gain a foothold in the region. Defence assistance and foreign aid were valuable tools in this regard. In spite of this, Australia was cautious in dealing with the challenges presented by the Vanuatu unrest, concerned that the situation posed risks for other areas: Bougainville had already shown its potential to unravel in the run-up to PNG's independence. Australia was concerned that `onlookers would automatically assume a PNGDF intervention carried Australian endorsement' (ibid.: 30) and concerned about the fallout for neighbouring countries, especially Indonesia.[41] In part, that helps explain Australia's attempts to dissuade PNG from sending troops. By delaying its support for the operation — a source of irritation within the PNG government and its bureaucracy — Australia underlined internationally that PNG could not take the defence relationship for granted. PNG, however, remained determined, and the *Kumul* Force readied for deployment.

Operations

'For the first time in the Pacific [since the Second World War], the use of force was no longer the sole preserve of the white administering powers' (Dorney 1990: 192).

The PNGDF contingent included A Company, 1 PIR, and B Company, 2 PIR, with HMPNGS *Madang* and *Samarai* (Attack-Class Patrol Boats), and two DC3 and one Nomad aircraft. Huai also had under his command sixty-five men of the Vanuatu Military Forces (VMF). The troops assembled for the operation — codenamed *Wantok Durua*[42] — were issued with flak jackets, helmets and tear gas masks in addition to their standard field equipment. These items were

---

[41] During the Bougainville rebellion in 1988/89, Australia again became concerned over the Indonesian reaction to instability in PNG. In the event, Indonesia made clear it saw Bougainville as an Australian problem, showing no inclination to become involved militarily (discussion General Tri Sutrisno, 1989).

[42] The name was derived from the *Tokpisin* word *wantok* meaning friend and the PNG Motu word *durua* meaning to help.

standard in internal security operations. The ability of soldiers to patrol in such heavy equipment is markedly reduced in tropical climates; however, the use of flak jackets reduced the risk of casualties. For that reason, equipment boosted morale and confidence among soldiers.

The PNGDF operational plan emphasised a two-pronged deployment of troops, to Santo in the north and to Tanna to the south of Port Vila. The Tanna deployment had been planned in response to unrest that began on 11 June when rebels freed supporters who had been gaoled. Colonel Huai allotted the task of securing Tanna to then Major Geoff Key (a Morobean from B Company 2 PIR).

There were risks involved in dividing the *Kumul* Contingent between Santo and Tanna. The logistic effort alone would have stretched the capacity of the Force to supply both its isolated elements. The PNGDF had little in reserve in the event of an escalation of unrest or a more concerted effort by the rebels. However, the deployment of British-led police units prior to the arrival of the PNGDF settled the situation on Tanna. The restoration of order on Tanna was therefore a windfall for Huai, who could now concentrate his forces on Santo, confident that his contingent could be supported.

Colonel Huai set down three principal objectives in his operational plan for Operation *Wantok Durua* on Santo. These were:

- Phase 1 – to secure Pekoa Airfield, Santo;
- Phase 2 – to capture Luganville (Santo Town); and
- Phase 3 – to capture Tanafo (Vemarana rebel headquarters) (East 1981: 72).

Major Taeni (A Company 1 PIR) was tasked with securing Pekoa airfield and, later, Luganville. The airfield was tactically important, providing a point of lodgement and a means of resupply, and for reinforcements. The airstrip could then be used as a base for the assault on Luganville, only fifteen kilometres away. On 18 August, the first elements of A Company aboard PNGDF DC3 aircraft landed at the airfield. The troops were surprised at the lack of opposition — prior to the arrival of the *Kumul* Force, attempts by Lini's representatives to land and broker a settlement with Stevens had been thwarted by obstacles on the airfield.

Surprise, coupled with the rapid buildup of the PNGDF presence, enabled Huai to secure the airport. He could now move into Santo and, in the event of contact with the rebels, he could evacuate PNGDF casualties. These were important to Huai's plan, instilling confidence among the rank and file. While Pekoa airport was an important asset, Huai knew that Luganville was a crucial objective. Intelligence showed that the rebels still held the town and he had to assume they intended to resist PNGDF attempts to capture Luganville.

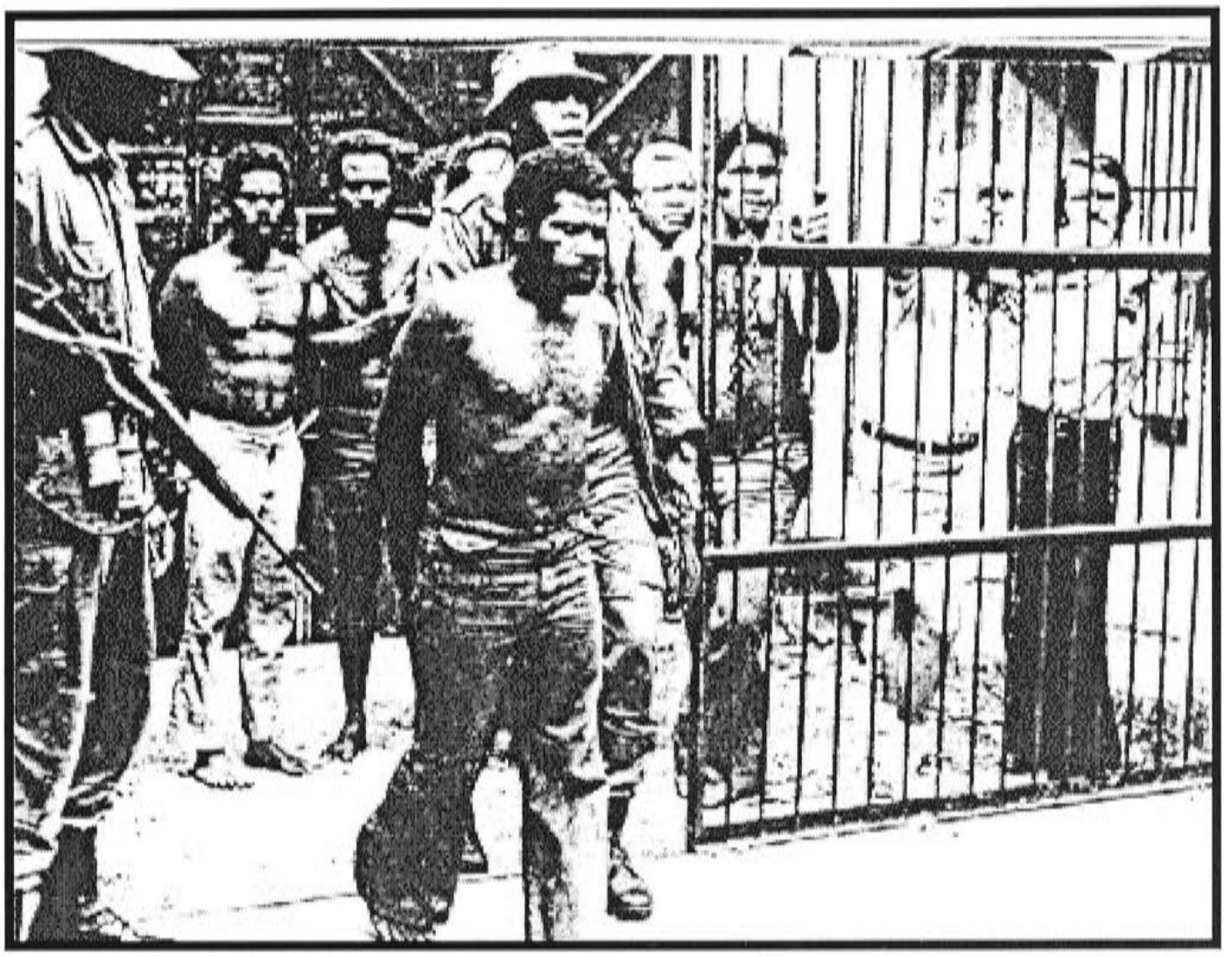
Colonel Huai decided to move quickly on Luganville. As soon as he had sufficient troops on the ground, A Company was ordered to advance towards the town. The company encountered no opposition and the town was secured. The rebels had abandoned Luganville in favour of their stronghold in and around Tanafo. Within twenty-four hours of the start of the Operation, two of the three key objectives had been secured without firing a shot.

Huai was enjoying success at sea as well. PNGDF patrol boats intercepted boats that had been supplying rebels on Santo. The same boats had been used to move looted goods. On 19 August, four craft were intercepted and their crews placed in custody. Another, the *Pilou Pilou*, was also arrested (Beasant 1984: 127). The capture of these boats isolated the rebels on Santo, preventing rebels, including French supporters, from escaping the PNGDF operation.

While Huai was pleased with his initial successes, he knew that once the rebels regrouped, the *Kumul* troops faced a more serious threat. As a priority, Huai consolidated his hold on Luganville, around key installations and on town approaches. Troops were ordered to set up roadblocks and defensive positions around the town to prevent rebel infiltration. Patrols and roadblocks led to the arrest of over forty rebel suspects (ibid.: 127) (Figure 3.1). Among those captured was the so-called rebel secretary-general, Georges Cronstadt, a French citizen.

Figure 3.1

Captured Rebels

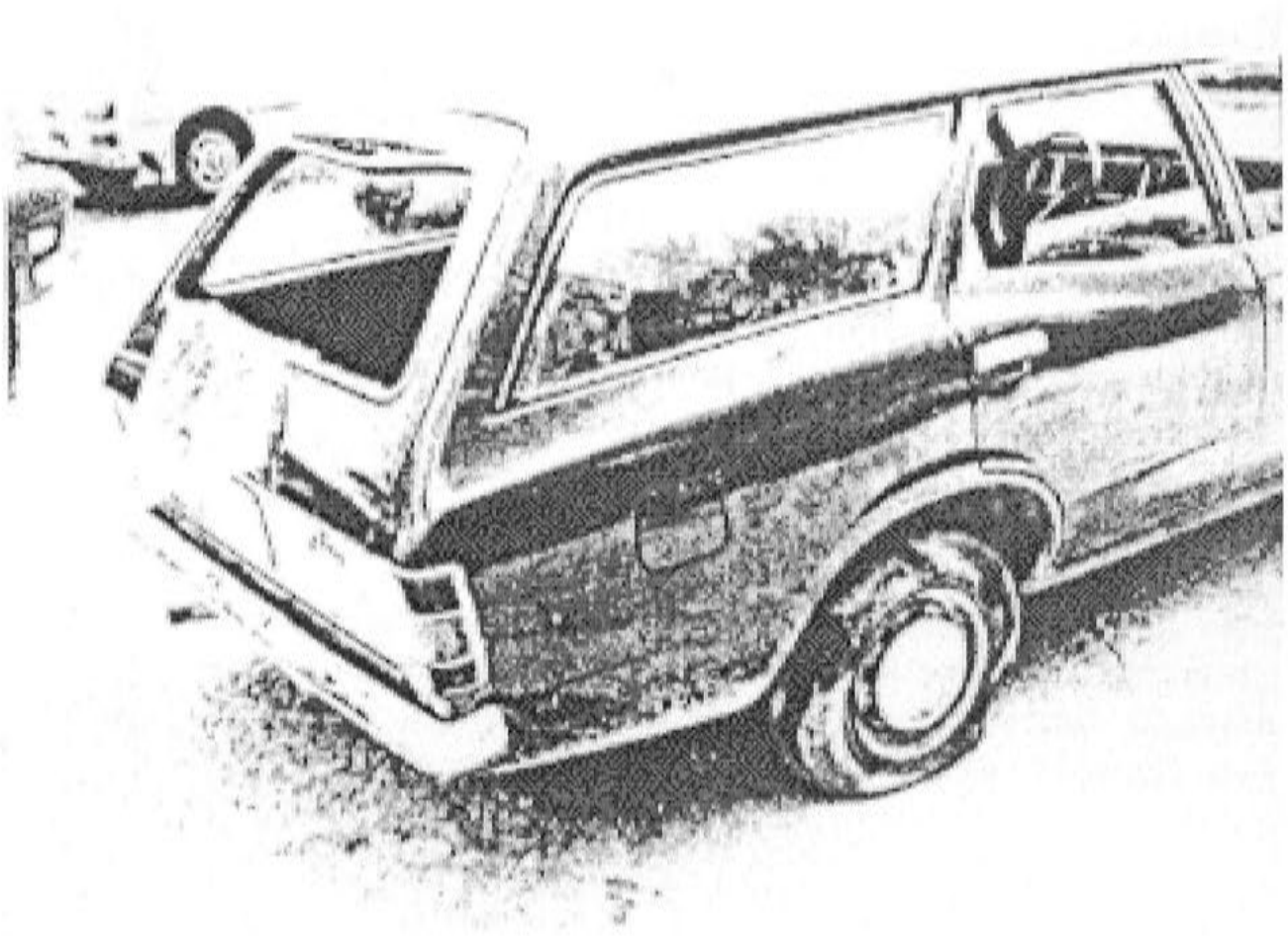


The roadblocks limited rebel activity and provided a means of monitoring civilian movement. Nonetheless, on several occasions, people attempted to break through roadblocks. Those attempting to run the roadblocks were intercepted at another further down the road. By siting the troops at important locations, Huai was able to add depth to the security measures being taken in and around Luganville. Shears (1980: 201) observed that several cars recovered by the PNGDF had `their back windows shot out or their tyres flat' (Figure 3.2). Within a short period of time, the local population learnt that the troops, in the company of members of the VMF, were serious about enforcing their right to detain and search vehicles. Yet the practice of firing randomly into vehicles ran the risk of causing civilian casualties.

Figure 3.2

Car Damage

(Shears 1980: 122)



As part of his protection plan, Huai dispatched patrols from Luganville. These patrols were tasked to detect rebel movement and to gather information on rebel locations prior to operations against Tanafo. Huai understood that, as the PNGDF came closer to the rebel village, the rebels' determination would increase. Huai's wariness was borne out. In an attempt to restore some credibility, rebel elements mounted several attacks, including against Luganville, between 21 and 26 August. On 21 August, rebels attacked pro-government villages near Hog Harbour, north of Luganville, beyond the reach of the PNGDF. On 23 August, an attempt to blow up the Luganville power station did little damage but the attack showed that the rebels could not yet be written off.

A further attack was mounted on 26 August. A copra-processing mill was blown up not far from Luganville. The mill was hardly a strategic loss but the rebel attacks proved embarrassing for the Lini government. That may have played to the rebels' advantage but for rifts developing between rebel factions as a result of the incident. Conflict arose between the rebel group, led by Sylvain Bernanos, responsible for blowing up the mill, and Stevens. Beasant (1984: 131)

noted that Stevens' group, Nagriamel, had shares in the mill. As a result of the conflict, Stevens took `a stand against violence' (ibid.:), opting for a settlement.

On 25 August, Stevens asked for a meeting with government representatives. The meeting went ahead on 28 August under the watchful eyes of the PNGDF aboard a plane circling above (ibid.: 132). At the negotiations, Stevens asked for a conditional surrender and for a further meeting on 30 August, after he had put the terms of the surrender to rebels under his command.

When word of the proposed 28 August meeting reached Major Nuia, then Operations Officer, he implored Colonel Huai to consider capturing Stevens. Nuia reasoned that Steven's capture would see the rebellion collapse, reducing the risk of bloodshed on both sides. Concerned at the risks for a peaceful surrender posed by any attempt to capture Stevens, Colonel Huai ruled out Nuia's plan.

Thwarted in his attempt to capture Stevens, Nuia turned to other tactics. On 30 August, he ordered an operation to capture rebels at an observation post on the route to Tanafo; Nuia hoped to reduce the rebels' ability to warn the main rebel encampment of the impending attack. The patrol, on reaching the site, found the observation post deserted. The patrol commander sought permission to return to base. However, Nuia ordered him to ambush the Tanafo-Luganville road. Nuia reasoned that any rebels returning to the camp would be taken by surprise. Not long after establishing the ambush position, a vehicle containing rebels approached the ambush site. In spite of PNGDF calls to surrender, the rebels attempted to crash through. Soldiers fired on the vehicle, killing one occupant and wounding another. The dead rebel was identified as Eddie Stevens, son of Jimmy Stevens (discussion Colonel Nuia of 15 April 1997).

The first death at PNGDF hands of a rebel, the son of the rebel leader, raised the stakes in the conflict. A backlash was expected and soldiers were alert for any sign of trouble. The soldiers' caution prompted them to fire on rebel elements sent by Stevens to recover the body of his son. One rebel was wounded. Still, the rebels persisted and were eventually allowed to take the body back to Tanafo — a concession seen as one way to defuse the situation, at least for a time.

Even so, plans for the capture of Tanafo — Colonel Huai's third objective — were well advanced.

Since their arrival on Luganville on 22 August, two rifle platoons[43] had been conducting patrols to the north of the town, gathering information on Tanafo and other rebel areas. That information was used to finalise plans for an attack on Tanafo. The assault was set down for 31 August — by coincidence, the day after Eddie Stevens was killed. In order to further isolate Tanafo, PNGDF elements were deployed to Wide Bay where rebel groups had been sighted only days before. Major Mathew Efi, Commander of the HMPNGS *Madang*, put soldiers ashore on the morning of 31 August.

The first two soldiers immediately came under fire. One — Private Kokolo[44] (West New Britain) — was wounded in the foot. Major Efi withdrew the soldiers and ordered his boat crew to fire on the area with a 40mm Bofors cannon.[45] The patrol boat fire was seen by Wing Commander Woods, a loan officer piloting a PNGDF Nomad aircraft. Woods may have been concerned about the ramifications if the fire, seemingly indiscriminate, caused civilian casualties. In any event, Woods attempted to stop the fire by flying between the patrol boat and rebels (ibid.:). Whatever his motivation, Woods was ordered away from the area. The patrol boat withdrew shortly afterwards in order to obtain medical attention for the wounded soldier.

By 30 August, the PNGDF had cordoned Tanafo and the next morning troops entered Stevens' stronghold. They encountered no opposition and Stevens, along with many of his supporters, surrendered without a shot being fired by either side. Seventy-one ringleaders were arrested and transported to Luganville gaol. Shears (1980: 208) described Stevens' surrender as a `pathetic end to the old rebel's defiant stance against Britain, France and the central government'.

---

[43] Beasant (1984: 135) claimed that these elements were specialist soldiers of the PNGDF, erroneously (discussion Lieutenant Colonel G. Key, MBE of 17 April 1996).
[44] Private Kokolo was the only PNGDF casualty during Operation *Wantok Durua*.
[45] The 40 mm Bofors cannon was standard armament on the PNGDF Attack class patrol boats.

Figure 3.3

Capture – Jimmy Stevens

(Defence Report 1980: 23)

The capture of Stevens and many of the rebel leaders did not signal the immediate collapse of the rebellion. Indeed, PNGDF commanders understood the importance of keeping up the pressure. The rebels could not be allowed to regroup, especially under a more militant leadership. Mopping up operations continued on Santo for weeks afterwards.

Human Rights

The handling of prisoners on operations demands high standards. Soldiers are trained in prisoner escort duties with an emphasis on vigilance, segregation of prisoners and search techniques. All procedures are designed to minimise escape and the potential for injury to the guards and others. Soldiers are also drilled in the Geneva Conventions governing the protection and rights of prisoners.

During one of the mopping up operations, a village on Santo was raided by the PNGDF bent on capturing a French sympathiser. The soldiers found only his wife, a Vietnamese, and children. On hearing of his family's capture, the Frenchman emerged from the bush. Versions of the events that followed vary. Colonel Nuia claimed in discussion on 18 April 1997 that the Frenchman had

dynamite around his body and held a lighter in his right hand, threatening to blow himself up along with others caught in the blast. In any event, Sergeant Yapi (PNGDF Public Relations) captured the man's arrest on film (Figure 3.4). The photograph shows an armed (then) Major Nuia striking the restrained prisoner. Whether the Frenchman was wired with explosives is not clear from the photograph. Nuia was concerned that the incident not be made public and ordered Captain Ivan Iamo (Staff Officer Grade 3, Public Relations) not to release the photo. However, Captain Iamo released the photo to the press a week later.

Figure 3.4

Suspected Rebel - Arrest and Search

(The Times 21 Oct 1984: 21)

Nuia was no stranger to controversy. During August, John Beasant, press spokesman to Walter Lini, concluded an agreement with Phillipe Delacroix, a rebel leader and a dedicated secessionist. Under the agreement, Beasant assured Delacroix safe passage through the French sector and eventual release in Port Vila. In fact, the PNGDF detained Delacroix for questioning on Nuia's instructions. Nuia stopped Beasant's vehicle on the pretext of a phonecall for Beasant; once Beasant had left the car, Nuia arrested Delacroix and handed him to the police. Beasant (1984: 138), who recorded the incident, critically, did not elaborate on the actual events other than to note that Delacroix was mistreated during questioning. Beasant was furious but could do little, given the government's reliance on the *Kumul* Force.

The incident highlights the poor control exercised by the Vanuatu government over the security forces, despite the PNG/Vanuatu agreement which placed the *Kumul* Force under the control of the National Security Council. The incident also shows that in internal security situations, where the government faces grave problems, there is a reluctance to call the security forces to account — a dilemma faced by the PNG government during the Bougainville unrest from 1988. The human rights situation during the Vanuatu rebellion may have been worse had the PNGDF suffered higher casualties.

The PNGDF was not the only one accused of human rights abuse. Accusations were levelled against the VMF even before the PNGDF deployment. Indeed, Shears (1980: 193) observed first hand that prisoners were `roughly ... prodded with rifle muzzles ... and made to stand'. Still, while some incidents did occur, there appears to have been little evidence of widespread abuse by the security forces. Of those incidents reported, few prisoners were put at real risk.

Logistics

A sustained logistic effort was fundamental to the success of Operation *Wantok Durua*. That support was provided to the *Kumul* contingent by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The relatively short duration of the deployment — soldiers were operating in Vanuatu for only six weeks — reduced potential logistic problems for the Force. East (1981: 74) observed correctly that a `longer campaign would have exposed the weaknesses in the capability of the Force to maintain operations in the field'. Indeed, the capacity of the PNGDF for sustained operations was not really tested. Colonel Huai was conscious of the lessons learned during Exercise *Kumul 1* prior to the deployment, which exposed PNGDF logistic weaknesses. He also recognised that:

- the PNGDF benefited from operations concentrated in the northern islands;
- the contingent suffered only one casualty on operations, thereby freeing aircraft for other support roles;
- rebels at no time presented a serious threat to the units in the field, reducing the need to reinforce positions on Santo or elsewhere;

- the islands had supplies of fresh water so that troops did not rely on air transport for water resupply (requiring a sustained effort on operations);
- operations were of limited duration for relatively small elements of the contingent, reducing the need for the air supply of rations; and
- ammunition usage among soldiers was limited by the sporadic rebel activity and by the enforcement of the rules of engagement.

The quality of logistic support played an important role in the success of the operation. While the importance of logistic support was recognised at the time, the PNGDF made few plans to enhance that capability in the years that followed the Vanuatu deployment. Rather, PNGDF involvement in law and order operations between 1984 and 1988 distracted the attention of staff at all levels from logistic issues. As a result, logistics slipped on the list of priorities. The lack of focus on logistics was not confined to contingency scenarios but also applied to the basic support for soldiers within their barracks. Eventually, that neglect would play a key part in fuelling discontent among the rank and file, culminating in the pay riots of February 1989. The Vanuatu campaign could have been a valuable experience for future PNGDF roles but the lessons were ignored.

An Early Blueprint

Although Operation *Wantok Durua* was conducted abroad, the PNGDF faced, in Vanuatu, a situation with similarities to the problem that emerged on Bougainville in 1988. Santo was economically the most important island in the New Hebrides. That provided incentive for Lini's government to retain Santo in the Republic at independence. Santo's economic attributes also gave the rebels confidence in their ability to become a viable independent state.

The Vemarana rebellion was in part a colonial legacy. Traditional groups were arbitrarily split by the administrative powers. The desire on the part of these groups to realign according to traditional arrangements helped fuel secessionist sentiment. As land ownership became an issue, the rebellion gained widespread support among island communities. These factors also occurred on Bougainville, where traditional borders and land ownership were critical issues. Combined with concern about the impact of the mine, they provided strong motivation for rebel

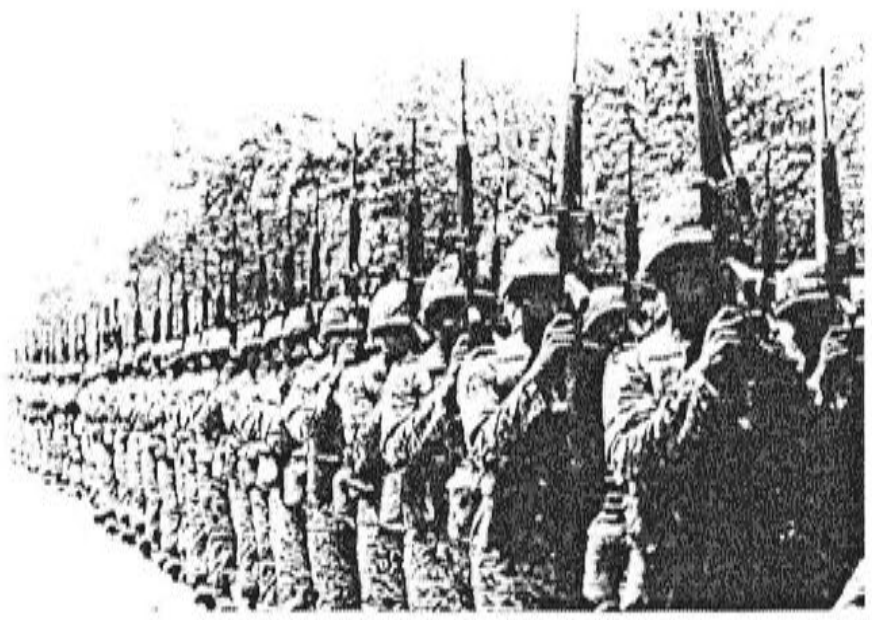
elements, which was exacerbated by military intervention. In Vanuatu, however, secessionist sentiment was not accompanied by a strong commitment to a long-term military struggle, as it was on Bougainville. Consequently, the PNGDF was able to quickly end the Vemarana rebellion.

Vanuatu therefore became an early blueprint for later operations on Bougainville. Indeed, many of the officers involved in operations in Vanuatu, such as then Major Geoff Key and Lieutenant Colonel Nuia, would be key commanders on Bougainville. However, the lessons learned on operations would be forgotten. The importance of good logistics in maintaining morale and gaining the advantage over an elusive enemy was overlooked. Commanders needed to recognise enemy capabilities in planning operations. For the time being, in 1980 the PNGDF was able to revel in its success with parades in Port Moresby (Figure 3.5). The *Kumul* Force was also recognised with the issue of medals.

Figure 3.5

Parade - *Kumul* Force

(Defence Report 1980: 1)



Members of the *Kumul* contingent deployed to Vanuatu for operations were awarded the Vanuatu Service Medal. However, poor administration and financial constraints resulted in the presentations being delayed until 1988, when Vanuatu's Foreign Minister visited Port Moresby. Australian loan personnel who accompanied the contingent were also awarded the medal. In addition to the Service Medal, members of the contingent who participated in the independence celebrations on 30 July were awarded the Vanuatu Independence Medal.

The Aftermath

The PNGDF could well be proud of its achievements in Vanuatu. The contingent had brought the rebellion to a speedy end with minimal loss of life. Those achievements would, at least in the short term, dampen criticism of the force. The PNGDF advertised its success in a triumphant parade through Port Moresby. Morale was high and the soldiers enjoyed a recruiting windfall, with Papua New Guineans clamouring to join.

Brigadier-General Diro benefited as well. Diro pursued the opportunity for the overseas deployment personally, and had taken risks in pressing for the PNGDF intervention. In 1993, he claimed in an interview that he was prepared to `resign and go to Vanuatu to lead a mercenary force against the rebels' (Gubb 1994: 21). Diro's commitment to mounting a successful operation has never been doubted though his motivations are not altogether clear. Certainly, success established the force as a key institution in PNG. Turner (1990: 119) noted that the Vanuatu deployment `brought kudos to the PNGDF and its leader, Brigadier-General Ted Diro'. The contingent had been committed in spite of Australia dragging its feet. Diro would henceforth be more confident in dealing with the bilateral relationship. In the longer term, Diro had made his mark, as a prelude to entering politics.

However, after Vanuatu, soldiers had to return to peacetime soldiering — training, border patrols and civic action. Skills and motivation would be eroded well before troops were committed to law and order operations four years later, in 1984. While the soldiers looked overseas for new commitments, the border with Indonesia and, later, internal problems would become the force's principal focus.

Conclusion

The rapidity with which PNGDF troops quelled the rebellion in Vanuatu belied the issues at stake in 1980. Several countries played roles which carried risks: Vanuatu in calling on foreign intervention, PNG in sending troops, and Australia in supporting them. Britain and France, as the colonial powers, bore responsibility for the post-independence well-being of Vanuatu. Yet their respective governments had to protect bilateral relations in the process of securing

agreement on the way ahead for Vanuatu. For these reasons the rebellion was certain to attract international attention.

The critics too had opportunities. PNG's military inexperience ensured a constant questioning of the deployment and pressure on Australia to underwrite the operation. Prime Minister Chan's motives were questioned, especially with the lives of Papua New Guineans at stake. Somare had insisted on a multinational force (Post-Courier 8 July 1980). The Lini Government in Vanuatu, in seeking foreign intervention, provided scope for those making mischief. France, in seeking to protect its citizens, especially in the rebel areas, weathered criticism. Britain was blamed for withholding support for its former colony which some saw as a part of its responsibilities as the former colonial power. In the event, the critics drew international attention to a region largely ignored by other than regional players. Vanuatu survived the unrest, perhaps justifying the risks.

Operation *Wantok Durua* also marked a watershed in PNGDF/ADF relations. The ADF had played a supporting role while the PNGDF took the risks. The PNGDF could justifiably claim the kudos for the operation's success, notwithstanding ADF support. The decline in the ADF presence coincided with a feeling of new-found confidence in the PNGDF. The soldiers' operational experience was more recent than that of the ADF. In any event, Australia had signalled its reluctance to become involved in internal security. However, the PNGDF was not able to sustain the professionalism which would have prepared the Force for internal operations in 1984. By then, Vanuatu and the *Kumul* Force exploits had become little more than a memory, within PNG and internationally.

****

Appendix 2 to
Chapter 3

Chronology

Vanuatu

1960		Nagriamel movement established by Jimmy Stevens in Vanuatu
1970	1 Jul	Nagriamel petitions UN to prevent the sale of land
	Aug	New Hebrides National Party (NHNP) established
1974		Mouvement pour l'Autonomie des Nouvelles-Hebrides (MANH) established
1979		Father Walter Lini, VP leader, appointed Prime Minister of Vanuatu
1980	Mar	PNG apprised of possible request for military assistance
	April	Talks to resolve differences among dissident groups fail
	28 May	Rebels occupy Luganville
	May	Rebels take control of Tanna Island
	1 Jun	Jimmy Stevens declares provisional government / Independent State of Vemarana
	11 Jun	Violence on Tanna Island-rebels free supporters from gaol
		France deploys Paramilitary Garde Mobile to Vila
	Jun	Britain deploys 120 soldiers (42 Royal Marine Commando)
	Jun	France withdraws Garde Mobile
	20 Jun	100 French paratroops deploy after Britain deploys Marines
	28 Jun	Anti-government demonstrations - Malekula
	Jun	Lini seeks emergency powers to restore order - France opposes
	7 Jul	Somare urges PNG to assist `under international supervision'
	14 Jul	Chan/ Diro meet Lini - in principle agreement to provide troops
	17 Jul	Visit by Brig-Gen Diro-leaves with formal request

22 Jul	Papua New Guinea prepared to respond to any request for assistance
25 Jul	Governor-General recalls Parliament for emergency session
30 Jul	Republic of Vanuatu declared-37th Commonwealth member
5 Aug	Papua New Guinea's Parliament sees enabling legislation blocked by Opposition
7 Aug	Papua New Guinea's Parliament approves legislation
9 Aug	Lini signs Treaty of Friendship in Port Moresby
12 Aug	Australia announces limited participation in support of PNGDF
17 Aug	Vanuatu Parliament ratifies Lini's agreement of 9 August
18 Aug	*Kumul* Force deploys to Vanuatu
19 Aug	*Kumul* Force relieves British and French forces
26 Aug	PNGDF deploys to Tanafo
30 Aug	Soldiers fire on vehicle - Eddie Stevens killed
31 Aug	PNGDF captures Tanafo - Stevens called on to surrender PNGDF land at Wide Bay - 1 PNGDF wounded
6 Sep	PNGDF enter Port Orly - last rebel village
13 Sep	PNGDF clear Big Bay, North-East and South Santo
23 Sep	PNGDF enter South West Bay and Lamap -102 arrested
25 Sep	Chan visits Vanuatu
27 Sep	*Kumul* Force withdrawn
4 Oct	Victory parade by *Kumul* Force - Port Moresby

Chapter 4

Patrolling

Border Operations and Civic Action

Introduction

The border area between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia (See map) has been a central and longstanding feature of PNGDF history. Since 1962, the border has been the predominant influence on defence policy in Papua New Guinea. The expansion of the Pacific Islands Regiment following its reformation in 1950 was motivated by concern over Indonesian expansionism, principally in West Papua (Irian Jaya). That concern would provide for the PIR a principal duty in maintaining security along the common border with Indonesia.

Patrolling became the focus of PIR training in order to support its commitment to border security. In the process, Australian officers and NCOs gained valuable experience used, in many cases, later in Vietnam. Patrolling skills would also be used for assistance to the civil community elsewhere in PNG, especially after 1967 when the PIR commenced civic action patrols. Even after independence in 1975, patrolling played a prominent role in PIR duties. Only when the PNGDF became embroiled in the Bougainville conflict did the importance of patrolling in the PIR calendar make way for higher priorities.

Australia has played a central role in border issues, even after PNG independence in 1975. Australian interest is motivated by colonial links with Papua New Guinea and by the shared border with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Border treaties inextricably link all three countries. The Australian perspective is therefore important to any examination of the border.

Background

Australia became responsible for the security of (now) Papua New Guinea under Articles IV and VII of the Trusteeship Agreement signed on 13 December 1946. By the early 1950s, Australia was reforming the PIR to improve security in Papua New Guinea. Vanimo, near the northern border with Indonesia (See map), was selected as a PIR outstation in 1952. By 1953, the base had been established and A Company, 1 PIR, deployed to the base for six months.

Australian concern over communist activity in South East Asia, including in Indonesia, and obligations for the security of Papua New Guinea, prompted the Australian government's decision to reform the PIR in 1950 (See Chapter 2). Dutch control of West New Guinea enabled border issues to be resolved through agreements and cooperation. The relatively stable situation in West New Guinea under Dutch rule also reduced the refugee problem. Australia's focus in the post-war years was on the need to define the border and to establish consultative mechanisms. However, Indonesia was `already demanding the inclusion of Dutch New Guinea (later Irian Jaya)' (Sinclair 1992: 48). In 1962, the prospect of Indonesian control of West New Guinea heightened concern in Australia.

Australia embarked on a `$1.5 billion defence expansion programme ... which included the raising of a second battalion' (May 1986: 30). In the same year, soldiers from 1 PIR began patrolling the border, especially the northern sector. The Australian Cabinet also gave approval for aerial mapping of the border as part of a defence response to the potential Indonesian threat. Australia recognised that the `essential problem [was] that of an ill-defined border [with] very little control' (ibid.: 36). Mapping was therefore important, especially to the defence effort in the border area. Definition of the border reduced the risk of military clashes and assisted generally in policing the area. Many of the first patrols had, as a matter of priority, sought out topographical information for the production of early maps. The accumulation of this information ensured that future patrols were better prepared for the arduous demands imposed by patrolling the border region.

Indonesia assumed control of West New Guinea in 1963 after a period under the interim administration of the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA)[46] since August 1962 (ibid.: 20). Indonesia changed the name of West New Guinea to Irian Jaya. The Indonesian presence added to anxiety in Australia over Indonesian expansionism, which had already led to confrontation with Malaysia. Australia's defence expansion programme provided some comfort and underlined Australia's commitment to Papua New Guinea's security.

---

[46] For more detail on UNTEA see May (1986: 28, 53).

However, the expansion was slow and the Indonesian army was, by late 1963, flexing its muscle in the northern border area. Indonesian patrols were reported sometimes being found many miles inside Papua New Guinea. On occasions, Indonesian troops removed border markers, adding to tensions, which did not augur well for Australian/Indonesian relations at the time.

While the army was 'tight-lipped when questioned about its border activity' (Sinclair 1992: 127), patrolling was stepped up along the border in the wake of the incidents. Unit exercises were also being conducted in the border area by the end of 1964. In December, 1 PIR deployed as battalion to the southern border for Operation *Badwash.* The exercise was the first conducted by 1 PIR in the international border area. Soldiers deployed around Morehead. Exercises of this scale were a show of force to the Indonesian military leadership. In the case of Operation *Badwash*, troops showed that despite the distance of their home base from the border, the battalion could deploy quickly if the need arose. Still, the activities of West Papuan rebels had the most potential to cause friction.

Rebel groups had existed during Dutch rule though they posed only a limited threat. Anti-government activities gained real momentum under Indonesian rule. Initially, the Indonesians did not consider the rebels a serious threat. Early attacks were dismissed as `stomach politics — the result of occasional hunger' (Ryan 1970: 209). However, eventually, in the face of persistent attacks and casualties among its forces, Indonesian patience ran out. Villages suspected of harbouring or supporting the rebels were attacked in reprisals. That increased support for the rebels, including in the recruitment of rebel fighters. The rebels became adept at striking Indonesian targets and escaping retaliation. Many slipped across the border into PNG, exploiting the sanctuary afforded there. Such cross-border activity invariably drew the countries closer to potential conflict.

During the 1960s, Australia and Indonesia considered options to manage the problem. The installation of markers (Figure 4.1) along the border in 1966/67 promised to reduce friction. However, the deteriorating security situation in Irian Jaya, especially in 1965, ensured that Australia remained vigilant, deploying

patrols regularly in the northern and southern sectors. By 1968, patrolling was large-scale (May 1986: 42), reflecting concern over Indonesian objectives.

Figure 4.1

Border Marker – Wutung

(Ryan 1970)

Australia's approach to border issues and its relations with Indonesia invariably influenced Papua New Guinean attitudes. Yet not all shared Australia's attitude towards Indonesia. Some early local politicians stood out against Australia, preferring instead to develop their own views towards Indonesians. One such politician, Gaudi Mirau, noted during an address in the House of Assembly in June 1966, that Papua New Guineas would `decide whether to be friends or enemies of Indonesia' (Mench 1975: 35). Later, both Brigadier General Diro and Brigadier General Huai established close links with the Indonesian military leadership (See Chapter 5).

In PNG's post-independence period, the border continued to be the scene of clashes between Indonesian forces and the rebels, loosely formed into a coalition of groups known as the OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka* or Free Papua Movement); this posed problems for the PNGDF. The unrest grew in ferocity and magnitude. Several serious clashes in 1985 and 1988 drew Papua New Guinea and Indonesia closer to a military confrontation. However, in spite of these problems, the two countries resolved their differences. In all of this, the PNGDF played a key role.

Indonesian/Papua New Guinea Border

'The Indonesia – Papua New Guinea border is a classically arbitrary product of colonial history' (Prescott 1978: 21).

The border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia is defined on maps as the north-south meridian of 141 degrees[47] with the exception of the area along the Fly River bulge (See map) where the border follows the river's course. While the river seems to provide a more clearly defined section of the border, the course is continually changing. As a colonial boundary, the international border is burdened by the problems of many borders left as colonial legacies. The map makers found the use of the 141 meridian and the Fly River bulge convenient in defining the border. However, the border crossed tribal boundaries. Villagers routinely cross the border following traditional hunting and agricultural practices. To these people, the border held little significance.

The establishment of markers along the border in 1966/67 (Figure 4.2) helped define the border. However, for the villagers along the border and the troops sent to police that area, the markers were few and far between. The production of maps assisted the security forces in time though the villages and trails along the border changed as a result of the nomadic lifestyle of the people. The need, therefore, for troops to be trained to a high standard in navigation for operations was essential.

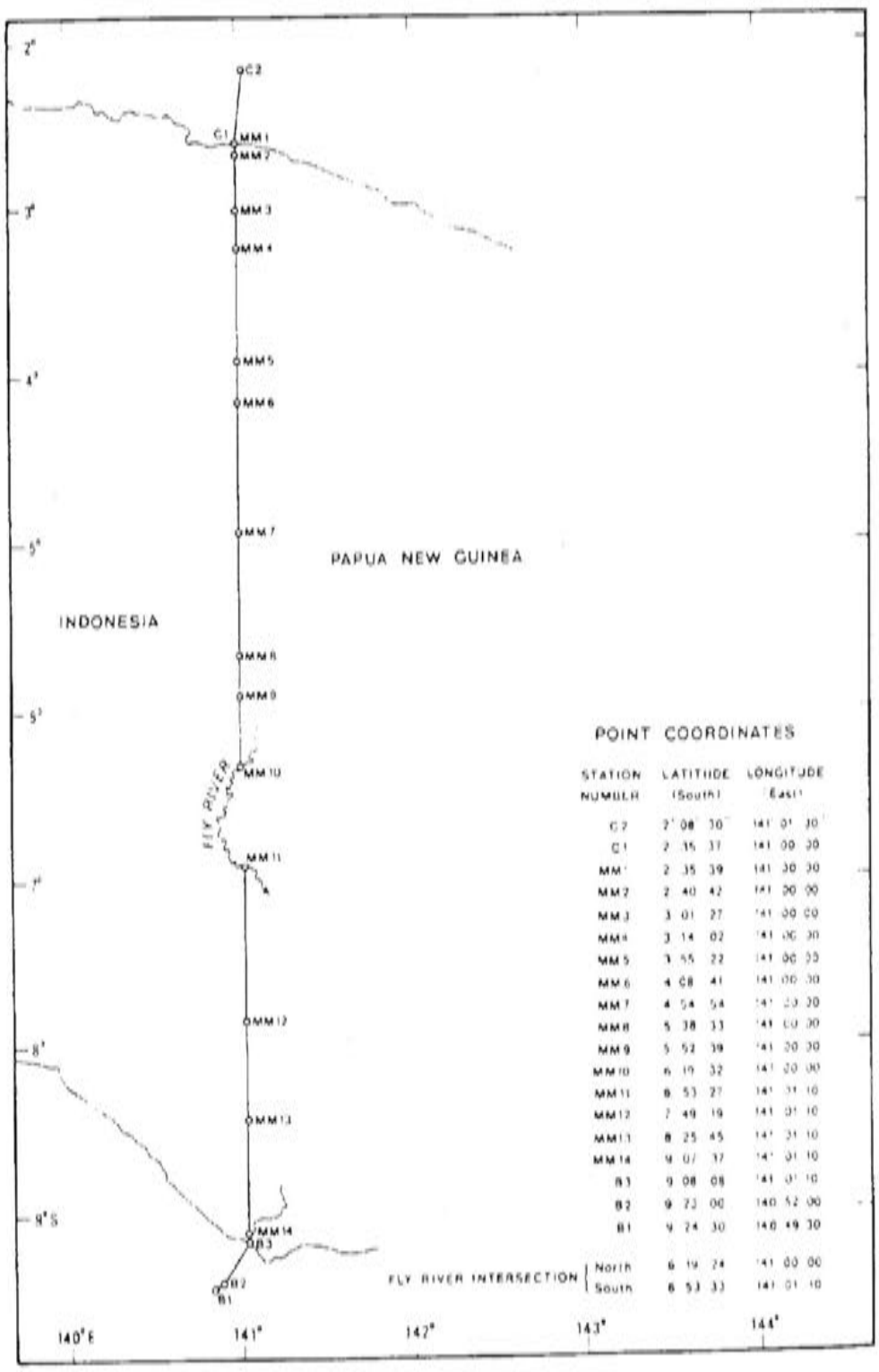
---

[47] The border south of the Fly River Bulge is 141 10 10, reflecting British and Dutch agreement to shift the border in that area to offset the territory which the British gained from the Fly River Bulge (For more detail see Van der Veur 1966).

Figure 4.2

Border Markers

(May 1986: 8)



Even as mapping improved navigation in the border area, soldiers still faced problems. Navigation was important if troops were to avoid crossing the border accidentally and consequently clashing with Indonesian forces. Accurate positioning was also needed for medical evacuations and resupply. Special emphasis was thus placed on navigation skills and check navigators were used

during patrols.[48] Navigation in close country was especially difficult. Points of reference such as key mountains were often hidden from view by vegetation or clouds. Often the clouds were so pervasive that aerial mapping resulted in tracts of land shown as blank on the maps, denoted as `not shown due to cloud cover'.

The terrain presented problems. Patrols could not follow compass bearings without regularly being forced to compensate for obstacles, including rivers, ravines, cliffs and flooded areas. The latter were particularly prevalent in the southern sector. Bypassing these areas added to patrol times. During the 1980s, PNGDF patrol commanders chose to avoid these areas, using instead local villagers as guides, though as a result, the military lost valuable opportunities for intelligence gathering. The risk was that the villagers would ensure that the patrols avoided areas in which the rebels had established camps.

The taxing physical environment added to navigation difficulties. The PNGDF (and the Australian defence personnel before independence) had to contend with considerable hardship over extended periods. The extent of that hardship is illustrated in the following account by an early PIR patrol:

> This was a new route ...[which] followed a very poor track, descending to the Igarini River, which was reached after 20 minutes. Then a steep climb up a ridge to an altitude of 2,450 feet, after a further twenty minutes, followed by a steep descent for 30 minutes to the Lhisa River. Up another steep ridge for fifty-five minutes. Descended to 2,200 feet, then a long climb to a ridge-top village at 3,225 feet, after a further one hour's walking. Steep descent to 2,500 feet to Bolo River, then a long, hard climb to a ridge top at an altitude of 4,050 feet, reached after two hours five minutes. The going was very tiring as the track had to be cut all the way (quoted in Sinclair 1992: 79).

---

[48] The three section commanders in each platoon would usually navigate on patrol in addition to the platoon commander.

OPM

The OPM grew from discontent among various groups of West Papuan people with Indonesia's occupation of Irian Jaya. The movement grew from three main rebel factions: the *Komite Kemerdekaan Papua Barat* (Committee for Freedom of West Papua) and its *Front Nasional Papua*; a group of political activists led by Nicolas Jouwe and Marcus Kaisiepo; and the *Arfak* tribesmen of Manokwari (Ryan 1970: 240-241) (See also Osbourne 1986: 49-64). The disparate groups waged largely independent resistance action against the Indonesians. Friction among the groups culminated in 1963 in a `split in the independence movement, along both tactical and geographical lines [which] was to hamper the Papuan cause for the next twenty years' (May 1986: 51). In spite of their fragmented nature, the rebels remained a thorn in the side of the Indonesians. One group, led by Seth Rumkorem[49] (a former Indonesian army officer), declared West Papuan independence on 1 July 1971. With that, the rebels adopted the Morning Star flag (Figure 4.3), used by the OPM for several years before then, as the symbol of their struggle.

Figure 4.3

Morning Star Flag

(Ryan 1970)

[49] Rumkorem was arrested in PNG territorial waters near Rabaul in September 1982 as he was fleeing to Vanuatu. He was later settled in Greece (Dorney 1990: 256).

The strength of the rebel groups has been estimated variously at between 500 and 3000. The sporadic nature of attacks, involving groups usually numbering less than forty rebels, and the limited number of modern firearms used against Indonesian troops, suggests that only a small number are active. Several groups are involved given the geographic spread of these incidents. In spite of the attacks, the rebels have `never posed a serious threat to Indonesia's hold on Irian Jaya but ... a constant irritation, especially along the border with PNG' (Ball and Downes 1990: 393).

Indonesia wanted some way to get at the OPM without offending PNG. The Indonesian solution was joint operations, which would see a co-operative effort by both countries and provide Indonesia with approval to cross into PNG territory without the risk of a clash. PNG has consistently refused the first proposal, conscious of widespread support for the OPM within PNG and distrust of Indonesia. PNG has also opposed hot pursuit, which would allow Indonesian forces to follow up rebel elements withdrawing to the sanctuary of PNG. For its part, the PNGDF was not supportive of joint border operations. They shared the views of wider PNG society on the OPM. The PNGDF also knew that joint operations would expose their weaknesses and make their soldiers dependent on Indonesia.

PNG could not wash its hands of the border and looked for other options. In 1986, Foreign Minister Vagi visited Indonesia to lay the groundwork for a treaty (Post-Courier 3 February 1986: 1). The proposed treaty included an emphasis on consultation and regular liaison. The proposal attracted parliamentary criticism. The Opposition claimed that the Treaty was a `duplicate of the existing border agreement but with new and sinister additions' (Dorney 1990: 279). Indeed, treaties had been agreed in 1974 and again in 1979 which set down procedures for cooperative effort on the border. The new treaty thus built on the earlier agreements rather than representing a bold initiative of the Wingti-led government.

The Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship and Co-operation was signed in 1987. The two countries agreed to exchange defence attachés to facilitate liaison.

Even so, PNG was left with a refugee problem. Many refugees crossed from Irian Jaya in 1984 to escape Indonesian reprisals. PNG was hard pressed to handle the problem. Australia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) made contributions to addressing the plight of the refugees. Arrangements have been made on occasion to return refugees to Irian Jaya in return for promises of safe passage. Some refugees returned of their own free will, especially as conditions deteriorated in the camps. However, refugees remain a problem for PNG. The refugee camps also provide support to the rebels.

PNG's unwillingness to mount military action against the rebels and its resistance to joint border patrols have been seen by the Indonesians as tacit approval for the rebels' cause. Indonesian perceptions have been borne out by the political rhetoric of successive PNG politicians. Indeed, many PNG politicians `backed by public opinion, have ... felt no obligation to help Indonesia repress Melanesians' (Ball and Downes 1990: 393). In 1986, Momis, speaking as leader of the Melanesian Alliance, one of PNG's major political parties, `vowed to press for self determination for West Papua' (Post-Courier 21 May 1986: 1). Momis also emphasised that the PNGDF would not be used against OPM rebels. Without PNG's support, the Indonesians believed that the OPM would `wither on the vine' (Ball and Downes 1990: 394). Certainly, the sanctuary afforded rebels by PNG's proximity to the border was invaluable.

Notwithstanding the advantages enjoyed by the rebels, including the use of PNG territory, the OPM has conducted its struggle largely unaided by PNG. Weapons were stolen from Indonesian soldiers though ammunition was in short supply. Some individual weapons were stolen or acquired from within PNG. In 1990, several high-powered rifles and shotguns were stolen from Bensbach Lodge in Western Province. Some within the OPM advocated the acquisition of arms from international dealers. In 1976, two OPM leaders, Rumkorem and Prai, were in conflict when Rumkorem pressed for the use of overseas arms supplies (Dorney 1990: 255). The possibility of some arms supplies reaching the rebels through smuggling cannot be ruled out. However, the absence of large numbers of well-armed rebels suggests that few weapons were acquired by this means.

The OPM enjoyed political support in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. OPM representatives overseas, especially in Europe where members of the rebel government were in exile, assisted. The media coverage of rebel attacks and hostage incidents helped with publicity for their cause. PNG's newspapers often carried stories of rebel attacks and detailed Indonesian responses. The problem of refugees attracted particular attention. Yet the PNG government was sensitive to contact with the OPM. Lieutenant Colonel Poang was dismissed for his involvement with the OPM in Madang in the late 1970s. ABC reporter Sean Dorney had his work permit revoked following the ABC's screening of an interview with an OPM leader (ibid.: 2). That action was at odds with statements by PNG's political leaders expressing sympathy for the rebel cause. Against that background, the PNGDF found itself responsible for border security.

PIR Outstations

The first PIR outstation, established at Vanimo in August 1952, provided a base for PIR operations along the northern sector of the border in New Guinea. Later, with the establishment of a home base for 2 PIR at Moem Barracks in Wewak, Vanimo served as a base for the unit's border patrols. Such bases reduced the time needed for border deployments. The outstation also provided access to medical and resupply facilities and a place of comfort for patrol members to recover from extended operations. Vanimo reinforced the military presence in the area. In this, 2 PIR enjoyed a clear advantage over 1 PIR, which operated from Port Moresby.

Until 1986, 1 PIR patrols to the southern border lacked the support of a base in close proximity to the border. Travelling time added to the operational time on the border as patrols deployed by landing craft or by air. In the absence of modern medical, communications and transport facilities, 1 PIR border patrols were especially demanding. The lack of an outstation in the southern border area is difficult to understand, especially given the considerable defence expenditure in PNG during the 1960s and 1970s, and the success of Vanimo. Eventually, following a decision by the National Executive Committee (NEC) (No. 149/83) in

1983, the establishment of a base at Kiunga, was approved. However, the outstation was not established until 1986.

The Department of Defence acquired from Ok Tedi Mining Limited in 1986 several buildings on the outskirts of Kiunga township as a permanent base for 1 RPIR (Royal Pacific Islands Regiment)[50] near the border. The acquisition of existing infrastructure brought forward the deployment of a permanent presence in the southern border region. However, the administrative preparation for the deployment did not proceed smoothly.[51] Much of the fundamental preparatory work did not begin until the deployment was imminent. Standing operational procedures, designed as guidelines for military units, were not drafted until June, in spite of the use of such procedures at Vanimo for many years. These were eventually prepared in time for the first deployment, though other issues such as fire orders, hygiene inspections and rationing and quartering arrangements, remained outstanding until after the deployment.

The Kiunga outstation promised improved conditions and support for 1 RPIR patrols. The permanent presence also provided for the rapid deployment of patrols both to the border and to areas of unrest. The latter was especially important in the event of threatened unrest at the Ok Tedi minesite, which the government was keen to protect because of its key role in the economy. One such army deployment was ordered in 1988 (Operation *Iron Foot*) (See Chapter 6). The Kiunga base reduced costs associated with using troops deployed from Port Moresby to patrol the border. Even so, the base posed problems for the PNGDF.

The soldiers at the Kiunga outstation had difficulties coping with their extended absence from families and friends in Port Moresby. Soldiers from 2 RPIR had become accustomed to the absences due to the longstanding use of Vanimo. The troops in the northern sector also enjoyed closer proximity to their home base at Wewak. Soldiers could travel by land to Wewak if necessary. Kiunga was three hours flying time from Port Moresby. As PNGDF aircraft flying hours were cut under financial constraints during the 1980s, soldiers at the

---

[50] The PIR was granted the title `Royal' in 1984 (See Chapter 5).
[51] Author's experience as a military adviser in 1 RPIR 1985-88.

Kiunga base became isolated. Funds were not even available for emergency air travel on the weekly civil service from Kiunga.

After a K1 million refurbishment programme, the Kiunga outstation became operational on 29 July 1986 with the deployment C Company, 1 RPIR. The duration of the company deployment to Kiunga (and Vanimo) was set down for three months. The Commanding Officer, 1 RPIR rotated each of his four companies through Kiunga over a twelve month period. During the three month deployment, companies were expected to conduct four to six patrols. The frequency of patrols was influenced by the duration of each patrol and by the requirement to mount unscheduled patrols at short notice for operational reasons. The guidelines of four to six patrols per tour of duty recognised the high cost of patrolling; finance constrained border operations.

Headquarters staff also understood the special demands placed on soldiers assigned to border operations. The troops needed time to prepare for patrols and to recover from those operations. Nonetheless, an active patrolling programme was encouraged in order to avoid boredom and associated discipline and morale problems. In spite of these important considerations, Headquarters revised the duration of border deployments shortly after C Company arrived at Kiunga.

In the second half of 1986, the Defence Department became concerned at the expenditure blowout, which promised to exceed budget allocations for the financial year.[52] Indeed, by December 1986, funds did not exist for the purchase of fresh rations for the PNGDF bases. Soldiers were provided with field ration packs in order to overcome the problem. In an attempt to contain the overspending, the decision was made to extend border deployments from three to four months. The extension may have been justifiable as a short-term expediency. Considerable savings could be made by reducing the cost of transporting companies to the border. However, the decision was opposed by the battalion commanders who understood the problems an extended tour would present.

Invariably, the decision to extend the tour to four months led to morale and discipline problems, especially as the rate of patrolling declined. Soldiers

---

[52] The PNG financial year runs from January to December.

could not be sure that they would return to Port Moresby at the end of four months. Airlifts were subject to sufficient funds and aircraft serviceability. Company commanders, faced with simmering discontent among the soldiers, chose to ignore strict discipline to reduce confrontation. Inspections by Headquarters staff and Commanding Officers, which would have countered this practice, were not carried out. Standards fell away, leading to conflict with local villagers and among soldiers in the company. The erosion of standards also infected other members of the battalion as disgruntled soldiers returned from the border. Morale among replacement troops arriving for border duties was also inevitably undermined.

The decision to extend border duties to four months ultimately led to the outstations becoming a centre for troublesome soldiers. That became standard practice during Bougainville operations. Soldiers guilty of human rights abuses were often sent to a border outstation to restrict knowledge of their abuses, and as punishment. In the end, manpower for Bougainville was in such short supply that these same soldiers returned to Bougainville. Such was the demand for troops on Bougainville that the outstations were stripped of soldiers and even routine patrolling was not possible. The spiral into indiscipline was accelerated.

Soldiers had little incentive to conduct border operations. Patrols were physically demanding and usually boring. The payment of a patrolling allowance of K4 per day made little difference, even if there had been somewhere to spend the money. The allowance remained unchanged, only increasing after the 1989 pay riots (See Chapter 6). Lack of routine maintenance at Kiunga added to low morale. In spite of the evidence, the problems arising from outstation duties remain unresolved.

Military discipline was not the only casualty of the reduction in border operations. The decline in the PNGDF presence reduced contact with local villagers, officials, and OPM sympathisers. The result was detrimental to intelligence gathering on the border and the PNGDF became alienated from local communities. By 1990, the number of patrols had declined from twelve in 1982 to six (Sharrad 1993: Annex IV). Mench (1975: 114) pointed to the need to avoid

a loss of intelligence and local cooperation, warning that this could result in an undermining of the PNGDF's capacity to operate effectively in the border area. The problems foreshadowed in 1975 by Mench became a reality in 1986. By then the army faced few real challenges in the border, using *wantok* contacts of soldiers within the ranks to navigate and obtain information. The patrols became less professional, operating within logistics and transport limitations. One such patrol was deployed by 1 RPIR in early 1986.

Operation *Rabia Gabuna*

The last patrol deployed to the southern border from Taurama Barracks before Kiunga's opening was Operation *Rabia Gabuna* (March/ April 1986).[53] The patrol deployed by DC3 to Morehead after a three hour flight from Port Moresby. The patrol commander, Second Lieutenant Paul Iatau (Chimbu), had been energetic in his preparations. Yet, in spite of a preparatory period of several weeks, the patrol was poorly equipped for the tasks set down during the three week operation. Iatau faced deep-seated problems in accomplishing the tasks set for him, which called for the traverse of a route from Morehead to Weam near the border and return — roughly a distance of 100 kilometres.

The patrol strength of twenty-four soldiers was considered adequate for operations in the Western Province. There was no evidence of an Indonesian military presence which could pose a threat in the area, and the OPM rebel strength was limited to a few sympathisers. The patrol could thus have been reasonably expected to resolve any potential problems. The patrol was adequately armed with infantry small arms, such as the SLR, and M16 rifles, which were standard issue to platoon members. Live ammunition was in limited quantities, in part due to the limited risk. In most cases the live ammunition was a contingency measure for use against crocodiles or to shoot game. Soldiers also preferred to limit their stock of ammunition because its weight added considerably to their burden and limited space for additional food.

The duration of the patrol of three weeks meant that one, possibly two, resupplies would be necessary. Resupply was usually conducted by an air drop

---

[53] As the Training Adviser, I participated in the patrol's briefings, and deployment.

every 7 to 10 days, unless arrangements could be made for supplies to be prepositioned. Border patrols using prepositioned arrangements needed coordination and sound planning to ensure soldiers arrived at the rendezvous on time and before rations ran out. Security of the supplies was also a problem. Air supply was inherently difficult. Air support, even for operations, was dictated by uncertainty over the PNGDF's ability to pay for fuel, and the serviceability of its aircraft. Pilots could not be relied upon to locate the patrol.

Air resupply lacked sophistication. Prearranged drop points were often used and aircraft could not always land. Airstrips were subject to flooding and, in some cases, unusable after a torrential downpour. Planes had become bogged so pilots preferred to remain airborne. Parachutes were rarely used. That left only the option of allowing the resupply to freefall with damage to the contents. No provision was made for damaged rations. Soldiers met any ration shortfall by barter, purchase, or stealing from villagers' gardens. Resupply ultimately depended on communications.

The PIR used the ANPRC 25 or ANPRC 77 radio for very high frequency (VHF) communications. This radio was used by the ADF during the Vietnam conflict. The set was capable of good line-of-sight communications over ten to twenty kilometres. However, those distances were reduced by the age of the equipment and by the nature of the terrain. The radio battery had to be replaced regularly (usually daily). Border operations, especially for 1 RPIR, called for regular radio schedules with the Force Operations Room located at Murray Barracks in Port Moresby; the ANPRC 25/77 was therefore unsuitable.

The other radio equipment used by the PNGDF during the 1980-90 period was the MBLE high frequency (HF) radio. This equipment provided long range capability with radio signals reflected off the ionosphere and back to earth. That capability made the MBLE suitable for border operations. The radio proved to be versatile and became standard equipment. Many sub-units also had inadequate quantities of VHF radios. Therefore, in routine exercises and training, the PNGDF preferred to use the HF radio, especially as the ANPRC VHF radios aged. The result was an overuse of HF radios, which reduced their life.

The principal problem with the HF radios was the poor standard of battery. The radios used a rechargeable cadmium battery, which, with age, lost its capacity to hold a charge. Patrols could not carry sufficient numbers of spare batteries to overcome this problem so a solar recharger was provided. Dependence on the recharger posed problems. Most of the patrol's administrative work was conducted at the end of the day when poor light prevented further movement. Recharging required full sunlight, preferably in the period 1000 to 1400 hours, for extended periods. Patrolling was therefore interrupted to ensure communications schedules, especially in an emergency, could be carried out. Communications problems dogged border patrols and other troops deployed away from their bases for the greater part of the decade. On Bougainville in 1988-90, field commanders made unilateral decisions in the absence of good communications to their headquarters in Arawa and Loloho.

The patrol designated for Operation *Rabia Gabuna* faced communications and resupply problems as well. Troops knew of the problems, a factor which, understandably, affected morale. The poor state of their boots, uniforms, and field equipment placed greater demands on the soldiers. New uniforms would not be distributed until late in 1986 (See Chapter 5). The US-style field dress, introduced in 1980, was in a poor state of repair. Patrolling reduced these uniforms to tatters. Patrol members on their return presented as a motley group.

The poorly equipped patrol faced yet another major obstacle. Western Province in March/ April was subject to monsoonal rains, which flooded low-lying areas across the Province. (During the dry season, patrols in this area faced the problem of finding safe drinking water.) Lieutenant Iatau had given little thought to this problem in planning the patrol's route and rate of movement. In the plan, the patrol route was ambitious, placing increased strain on group morale. Once deployed, the patrol commander resorted to using local tractors and canoes, though the petty cash provided for unseen problems such as these proved inadequate. Given the conditions and the mood among patrol members, pressure grew to shorten the patrol route in order to rendezvous with the aircraft at Morehead for return to Port Moresby.

The patrol gained little from its three week deployment, aside from dated information from an OPM faction leader resting in the area. The results reflected poor commitment by Headquarters PNGDF, and the troops generally. 1 RPIR patrols to the southern sector of Western Province had historically been uneventful as Operation *Rabia Gabuna* bore out. The more risky deployments tended to be between Kiunga and Ningerum and around the Fly River bulge. Even so, patrols in the northern sector were potentially more serious.

Operation *Rausim Kwik*

In 1985, a combined PNGDF/RPNGC group of 200 personnel deployed between April and May to the northern border for operations around Bewani. The operations were designed to locate elements of the OPM and to destroy their camps in that area. In spite of PNGDF efforts, the security forces 'succeeded only in destroying some deserted huts' (May 1986: 62). Nonetheless, the operations demonstrated a change in government policy in which the OPM would be targeted if rebels chose to mount operations from bases in PNG. The Indonesians welcomed the change in policy though they understood the rebel threat would not be seriously weakened by PNG's change in policy. Still, the operations tempered Indonesian military activity across the border. However, the high profile PNGDF presence could not be sustained. Routine patrolling resumed for the remainder of the year. The next major deployment would occur in 1988.

Operation *Apple Pie*

In 1988, an OPM group attacked the Indonesian border outpost at Arso (See map), killing several soldiers and injuring others. The OPM also took hostages before crossing the border into PNG territory. The attack galvanised the Indonesians into a concerted effort against the OPM in Irian Jaya's northern border area. Plans were made also for attacks against known OPM camps in PNG. When news of the OPM attack reached Port Moresby, the PNGDF planned a prompt reaction, conscious that the Indonesians would, as before, cross into PNG territory to strike at the OPM.

Colonel Nuia, then Chief of Operations, deployed to Bewani two companies of soldiers to deter Indonesian operations against OPM elements on

PNG territory (discussion Colonel Nuia 15 April 1997). The Commanding Officer, 2 RPIR, Lieutenant Colonel Salamas, a New Irelander, was ordered to deploy one company from Vanimo and another from Moem Barracks in Wewak. The response — codenamed Operation *Apple Pie* — was slow in the absence of adequate transport. However, A Company, 2 RPIR, on border duties at Vanimo, deployed to Bewani together with Lieutenant Colonel Salamas and a small command post. D Company, commanded by Major Michael Tamalanga, followed from Wewak, taking up positions close to the OPM camps near Bewani.

Nuia became concerned about the lack of information on events in the border area being provided by Lieutenant Colonel Salamas. He deployed Captain Ben Maris, then an intelligence officer in Headquarters, PNGDF, in an attempt to meet his requirements. Captain Maris was also unable to provide information needed at headquarters so Colonel Nuia flew to the border to assume command. Salamas was effectively sidelined for the remainder of the operation.[54] Nuia joined A Company which, by now, had taken up a position just short of the reported location of Indonesian troops. In spite of efforts to locate the Indonesians, PNGDF patrols found no sign of their presence other than the body of an OPM fighter killed by Indonesian soldiers in an earlier raid.

The PNGDF's ability to defuse the situation and reduce the likelihood of a clash with Indonesian troops depended, in part, on the establishment of communications between both forces. Radio communications were not possible so Nuia sent a message to the Indonesian government agencies at Jayapura. He hoped that they would contact their units operating on the border and order their return. Still, Nuia realised that even if the officials were successful, the Indonesian patrols could not be recalled quickly. Indeed, shortly after the officials were contacted, Nuia received information about an Indonesian crossing to the north of his position at Bewani. The crossing showed that the Indonesians were intent on maintaining pressure on the OPM. In response, Nuia flew over the

---

[54] Lieutenant Colonel Salamas was also replaced as Commanding Officer on Bougainville in September 1989 just prior to the arrival of Colonel Nuia (see Chapter 7).

area to show the PNGDF presence. He had no way of knowing if the plan had been effective.

On his return, Nuia turned his attention to the OPM. He concluded that the Indonesians were unlikely to ease the intensity of their operations while the OPM held their soldiers hostage. Nuia learnt that the hostages may have been located not far from his position. D Company and Colonel Nuia moved into the area and contacted Hans Bomai, a local OPM commander. During the negotiations,[55] Bomai was told that the hostages were to be released by 1000 hours the next day (no doubt under threat of a PNGDF attack). Nuia was successful and the hostages were handed over to the PNGDF. Lieutenant Colonel Salamas accompanied the hostages on a helicopter to Vanimo and released them to Indonesian authorities.

The outcome of this border incident could have been much more serious. Several issues gave PNG and Australia concern. Indonesia's determination to rescue the hostages and to exact revenge on the OPM was unquestionable. In the face of such determination, the deployment of two PNGDF companies to the area to act as a buffer between the rebels and Indonesians was risky. Some incidents on the border had before resulted in exchanges of fire between the PNGDF and Indonesian soldiers.[56] The PNGDF was unsure of the strength of the Indonesian forces in the area or the strength of other Indonesian units stationed near the border. Constrained by a lack of air support and limited intelligence, the PNGDF may have been no match for the Indonesians had a clash occurred. In that, the OPM was an unpredictable element. Though they posed no real threat to the PNGDF, the rebels could have sparked an incident into which PNGDF elements may have been drawn.

The other concern was the unpredictability associated with the actions of Colonel Nuia. Colonel Nuia controlled the operation on the ground without reference to Headquarters or the Government in Port Moresby. While the

---

[55] At the same time, the PNGDF Commander, Brigadier-General Lokinap and Defence Minister Pokasui were visiting Irian Jaya.

[56] One such incident occurred in 1988 at Tarabits (discussion Brigadier-General Nuia of 12 July 1999).

situation was resolved peacefully, Nuia had a reputation for unilateral action. The absence of both the Commander and Minister gave Nuia room for manoeuvre.

In his account of events, Nuia, predictably, gave no sense of concern over his handling of the situation. He justified control of the operation in the field, rather than from his Headquarters in Port Moresby, on the basis of poor communications and concern over the actions in the early stages of Lieutenant Colonel Salamas. The same level of control could not have been achieved from the PNGDF Operations Room in Port Moresby. Neither did Nuia harbour any dislike of Indonesians. Indeed, he had attended the Indonesian military staff college, along with officers of the Indonesian army in 1979/80. He placed importance on his knowledge of the Indonesians. His confidence in handling the incident arose also from his good relationship with local rebel leaders, such as Bomai. Together, these factors assisted Nuia in resolving the issue.

Nuia overlooked the key role played by the consultative framework established under the Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship and Co-operation. The regular liaison visits by officials and their network along the border reduced some of the risks. Indonesia may have stayed its hand until reports had been prepared on the border. That gave Nuia time to secure the release of the hostages who had been the motivation behind the Indonesian military action. In any event, the border would not see another incident on the same scale as the PNGDF turned its attention to Bougainville in late 1988.

The army's border presence posed few obstacles to a determined Indonesian military offensive. PNGDF units were isolated with little capacity for rapid reinforcement. Ammunition stocks were insufficient for a prolonged conflict. The Indonesians could mount an operation across the border and withdraw before the PNGDF responded. So why did PNG incur the costs of border deployments, especially after the 1986 border agreement with Indonesia?

The PNGDF fulfilled an important role in deterring `acts of aggression by removing the temptation of an undefended easy prize' (Mench 1975: 158). The deployment of soldiers in response to cross-border operations by Indonesia demonstrated PNG's resolve to protect its territory. The presence of PNGDF

soldiers also gave a sense of urgency to resolve the problem by diplomatic means. The Indonesians were not constrained by the PNGDF's presence but understood, after PNG appealed to the United Nations in 1984 over Indonesian cross border raids and PNG's expulsion of the Indonesian Defence Attache (Dorney 1980: 275), the need to avoid cross-border raids becoming an international issue. Indonesia had no expansionist plans.[57] After 1984, the Indonesians stayed their hand for a time out of respect for PNG. That would have suited the OPM.

The PNGDF recognised that they could do little to prevent any concerted Indonesian military action against the OPM on PNG's side of the border. In any event, PNGDF patrol commanders were not prepared to take on the Indonesians. Almost without exception, patrols checked with local contacts to ensure that they avoided Indonesian patrols. That undermined the PNGDF's effectiveness as a deterrent force and ensured freedom of action by Indonesian troops and the OPM.

The PNGDF felt that their approach was justified. Troops took comfort in the knowledge that there was little political will to suppress the OPM. The occasional hardline rhetoric against the OPM was not backed up with resources for the PNGDF to mount operations in the border area. Chan, as prime minister in 1980, asserted that `his government did not recognise the OPM and that if there was a step up in guerilla activities in the border region ... PNG would feel bound to consider military action' (Post-Courier 10 December 1980: 1). But even Diro, in 1983, stepped back from openly criticising Indonesia over an incursion that year. Ultimately, in the `unlikely event that Papua New Guinea could muster the political will ... and the logistic support to ... seal the border, the OPM would continue to operate' (May 1986: 62).

Civic Action Patrols

> *`The Army's `civic mission ... [is designed to make] the PIR aware that the role of the national Army ... is to be ... loyal to the authority of the ... [Papua] New Guinea Government'* (Hastings 1969: 187).

The expansion of the PIR and allocation of generous funding in the 1950s and 1960s raised the state of preparedness as intended. However, the soldiers,

---

[57] See May (1986: 78-84).

other than those assigned to border duties, had few opportunities to use their skills. The unrest which occurred in 1957, 1961 and 1964 coupled with the need for the soldiers to recognise their role in the country, especially their subordination to the civil authority, gave impetus for Australian defence officials to find a way to channel the soldiers' energy.

In 1965, the then Commander, PNG Command,[58] Brigadier Hunter, CBE, LVO, had been impressed with a concept put forward by an Indonesian student, then Lieutenant Colonel Sarwo Edhie Wibowo,[59] at the Australian Army Staff College at Queenscliff.[60] That concept proposed a national army, which was built on strong links with the people. Wibowo emphasised the `valuable role played by civic action' (Sinclair 1992: 113). Brigadier Hunter saw parallels between PNG and Indonesia. He was also conscious that the Papua New Guinean soldiers had to earn their place in an independent PNG. This was particularly important given criticism of the army at the time, in part arising from unrest in 1961 and from clashes between soldiers and the police in 1964 (See Chapter 2). The then Defence Minister had emphasised the development of a `well- disciplined, stable and reliable ... force completely loyal to the government [which would] ... help identify the people with their army' (Lynch 1969: 22-23).

Towards the end the 1960s, veterans of the Vietnam conflict, posted to PNG Command, brought their experiences in civic action in Vietnam to the PIR. Many of these Australians completed training in Papua New Guinea prior to their deployment to Vietnam. On their return, they used their experience to train PIR soldiers. However, not everyone was pleased with the civic action programme.

Some were worried by the army's civic action role, which, paradoxically, had been introduced to facilitate public scrutiny of the army. Defence officials believed that pre-independence concerns over the army's role in the state could be put to rest if the public and government better understood the force. Officials also recognised the need for soldiers to understand their obligations to government and

---

[58] PNG Command had been created in January 1965 and included all ADF units, including the PIR, stationed in the then Territory of Papua and New Guinea (Sinclair 1992: 220).
[59] Brigadier General Wibowo would later assume command of Indonesian Forces in Irian Jaya.
[60] The College trains selected officers, including foreign students, for senior command.

people. Nonetheless, Vincent Eri (later PNG Governor-General) noted in 1969 that the army was 'replacing the administration in the minds of the people [and] preparing the ground for some future action' (quoted in May 1998: 150).

The Defence Force `favoured civic action projects which [were] relatively minor in nature [so that they could be completed] in a relatively short period of time' (Mench 1975: 127). Even so, the army also sought projects which had a big impact on the community (ibid.). Such projects were a constant reminder of the incapacity of local and provincial governments to deliver services, especially during the 1980s. Coincidentally, the army by that period was distancing itself from civic action in order to support law and order operations. The frequency of civic action patrols had declined from eighteen in 1976 to fourteen in 1982 and no patrols in 1989 (Defence Reports 1976, 1982, 1989). In some cases, the capacity of units, especially the infantry battalions, to carry out civic action was restricted by financial limitations on movement, and by the loss of expertise among soldiers in minor engineering roles.

Mench (1975: 127) forshadowed potential risks if the army was used to conduct civic action on a greater scale. He pointed to the possibility of military intervention arising from popularity gained through civic action. Politicians during the 1980s, including Ben Sabumei, as Minister for Defence, emphasised an increased role for the army in civic action, especially in the Highlands. The Engineer Battalion was allocated special funding, given primary responsibility for civic action and relocated to Lae from Port Moresby, largely for this purpose. However, financial restrictions, low manning levels and inadequately skilled manpower prevented a serious PNGDF commitment to civic action, in spite of the political pressure.

The PNGDF felt comfortable with a smaller civic action role. Indeed, senior officers had a long-held view that the army's primary role was to defend the country from an external aggressor. Commitments elsewhere, including civic action, detracted from that role. The officers recognised that civic action brought the soldiers closer to the people which had recruitment and intelligence dividends. However, deployments were costly and the troops had limited time to use their

military skills while involved in civic action. Senior officer attitudes were reflected in the defence review in 1990, which indicated that they were concerned that the Defence Force had to `shoulder more of the civic action burden ... at the expense of their military role' (PNGDF Discussion Paper 1990: 64). Senior officers also felt that politicians were employing the army for their private use (discussion Colonel Nuia 5 November 1996).

Aside from national politicians, the PNGDF had to contend with pressure from provincial and local governments for military support in the community. The framework for civic action requests had been deliberately established to ensure that all requests had political support before the army assigned its priorities according to unit commitments and capabilities. Interested parties forwarded requests for assistance to the local authority, usually the provincial government (Defence Report 1982: 29). The requests were prioritised and submitted to the Department of Defence for consideration. Such requests were received prior to the financial year in which the project was to be undertaken so that the Department could programme the patrol into the training schedule. Civic action requests were also referred to other government departments so that the provision of services was evenly shared. This was especially important where material costs were high. The PNGDF has limited capacity to provide materials but it is suited to the provision of skilled manpower and transport. Tasks suited to Defence were allocated to one of the PNGDF units for project liaison and completion. Civilian authorities were ultimately responsible for all projects, thereby ensuring the army's subordination.

The PNGDF insisted on this system, often to avoid *wantok* or influential individuals from pressuring them into agreeing to army support. During the 1980s, political rivalry between the levels of government, corruption, and general administrative inefficiencies led to an increasing tendency to go direct to the army. Mench (1975: 126) noted that the practice of working outside the formal system was already used prior to independence.

Notwithstanding criticism, the introduction of a civic-action patrolling programme provided the means to address several issues affecting PIR soldiers at

that time. In part, the momentum for the introduction of civic action patrols was provided because soldiers were becoming bored. In 1967, soldiers were sent to villages on civic action patrols, 'to mend radios, build roads and bridges; in fact, anything that would break the boredom' (Ryan 1970: 270). Ryan may have given an exaggerated account. However, soldiers were becoming bored with daily military life. Border patrols tended to be conducted on a roster basis, which saw most PIR soldiers deployed to the border area once every twelve months. During the rest of the year, soldiers trained without a clear purpose.

The Army recognised at the time that soldiers were disgruntled over their exclusion from Vietnam (See Colebatch 1974: 277). The soldiers failed to comprehend why, as members of the Australian Defence Force, they could not be deployed on operations in Vietnam. Some interpreted the situation as a slur on their capabilities. Some, especially senior officers, recalled the issue after the PNGDF's operational service in Vanuatu and, later, Bougainville. They noted, pointedly, in 1980 and 1990, that the Australians, unlike the PNGDF soldiers, lacked recent experience in guerilla operations. The civic action programme provided a timely change for the troops. The patrols also promised benefits for the army in PNG, in addition to contributing to the morale of the troops.

The army conceded that `the troops, spending most of their time in barracks, had been growing away from their people' (Ryan 1970: 270). Civic action patrols enabled the army to work closely with the villagers, establishing bonds of friendship. The patrols were so successful in this regard that local politicians were concerned that the army was undermining the civil authority in the provision of local services. Those concerns influenced discussion on the role of the post-independence PNGDF.

The civic action programme had modest beginnings. Patrols mounted by the PIR along the border were extended to other areas of PNG. The immediate gain for the army was a widening of the recruitment base. The opportunities flowed from two aspects. Recruitment was extended to a broader cross-section of the community thereby reducing the imbalances of tribal groups, which appeared often in African pre-independent armies. The other advantage was the army's

ability to recruit from otherwise isolated communities, which set up important networks in the event of operations in the area. The failure to continue this approach by the post-independence PNGDF led to problems during the 1988-90 Bougainville crisis. Those problems were a result of the absence, since 1979, of any PIR civic action patrols on Bougainville (See Chapter 7).

The civic action assistance was well received by local villagers. After independence, development slowed in the provinces as inefficiency and inadequate provincial government funding led to a decline in services. Villagers and local governments sought the army's assistance in development projects. In time, the PNGDF, faced with its commitment to Bougainville from 1988, was overwhelmed by requests. Those requests provided the PNGDF with an opportunity to develop close rapport with the communities and provided soldiers with training. Yet few civic action requests received assistance. The reasons for the poor army response need to be understood.

The PNGDF's inability to respond to requests for assistance arose in part from the changes in civic action management within the PNGDF. Civic action projects were small scale, requiring basic skills which initially were within the capabilities of the RPIR. For the most part, special skills, such as carpentry, were to be found within the Pioneer Platoon, part of the Support Company of the battalion. The skills of the Pioneer Platoon were gradually lost through resignations, lack of courses, and the recruitment to the Engineer Battalions of members of the platoon. The battalions became dependent on the Engineer Battalion for assistance. In the end, the Engineer Battalion assumed control of civic action, especially as the RPIR became involved in internal security.

The engineers were able to provide more sophisticated assistance to the civil community by combining their skills and engineering plant. However, the projects were limited by the availability of troops, many of whom would see service in internal security operations, including on Bougainville. Transportation problems associated with engineering plant also constrained their use.

Civic action received little emphasis from the mid-1980s. The PNGDF argued that the costs were not being shared by other departments and the role of

the army in the first instance was security — not civic action. The PNGDF's approach did not affect recruitment, which provided some motivation for its involvement. Recruiting tours were becoming restricted to major centres in the absence of adequate funding (See Chapter 2). In those centres, adequate representative numbers of provincial groups were available. Nonetheless, some civic action did occur with the assistance of Australian Defence aircraft.

Operation *Halvin Goix*

In 1988, 1 RPIR mounted a civic action patrol to Tapini District, in response to a local request for army assistance in repairing the local school.[61] The patrol — codenamed *Halvin Goix* — was allocated to B Company, 1 RPIR. The task presented two problems for the army: Tapini was located an hour's flying time from Port Moresby and the nature of the civic action required carpenter assistance not readily available within the battalion. The lack of unit transport ensured that troops could not be deployed by road. (Tapini was three to four hours drive over poor roads.) However, arrangements were made to use a RAAF Chinook in country for training to deploy the troops to and from Tapini.

The lack of tradesmen was addressed by seeking assistance from the PNGDF Engineer Battalion. The Provincial government provided the materials for the school repairs as a condition of the request. On 1 August, the company deployed by Chinook to Tapini, receiving a rousing welcome on their arrival. Local officials, including an armed patrol officer, met the troops. The patrol officer explained that local *raskols* had been active in the area and he was setting out on a patrol to investigate. The officer's weapon was in a poor state of repair and he had little ammunition. He had a difficult job. The local people (*Goilalas)* had a reputation for volatility, especially in the settlements around Port Moresby.

Notwithstanding local crime levels, soldiers set about repairing the school. The soldiers established a strong rapport with the local people in the four weeks in Tapini. Complimentary reports about the soldiers were also conveyed to the national government and Headquarters PNGDF. Yet the benefits of civic action

---

[61] As Training Adviser, I coordinated RAAF air support, deploying with the patrol to Tapini.

appeared to be lost. No patrols were mounted by 1 RPIR for the next three years.

Conclusion

The border with Indonesia has been a potential flashpoint for years. Serious incidents have occurred and the PNGDF has found itself embroiled in tensions. Even so, Indonesia's limited aims, essentially confined to the OPM, have contributed to a relatively stable situation. The concern in PNG is that the PNGDF lacks the capability necessary to police the border. That situation is unlikely to change thereby ensuring that at best the PNGDF will be no more than a trip-wire force as it was during the Second World War.

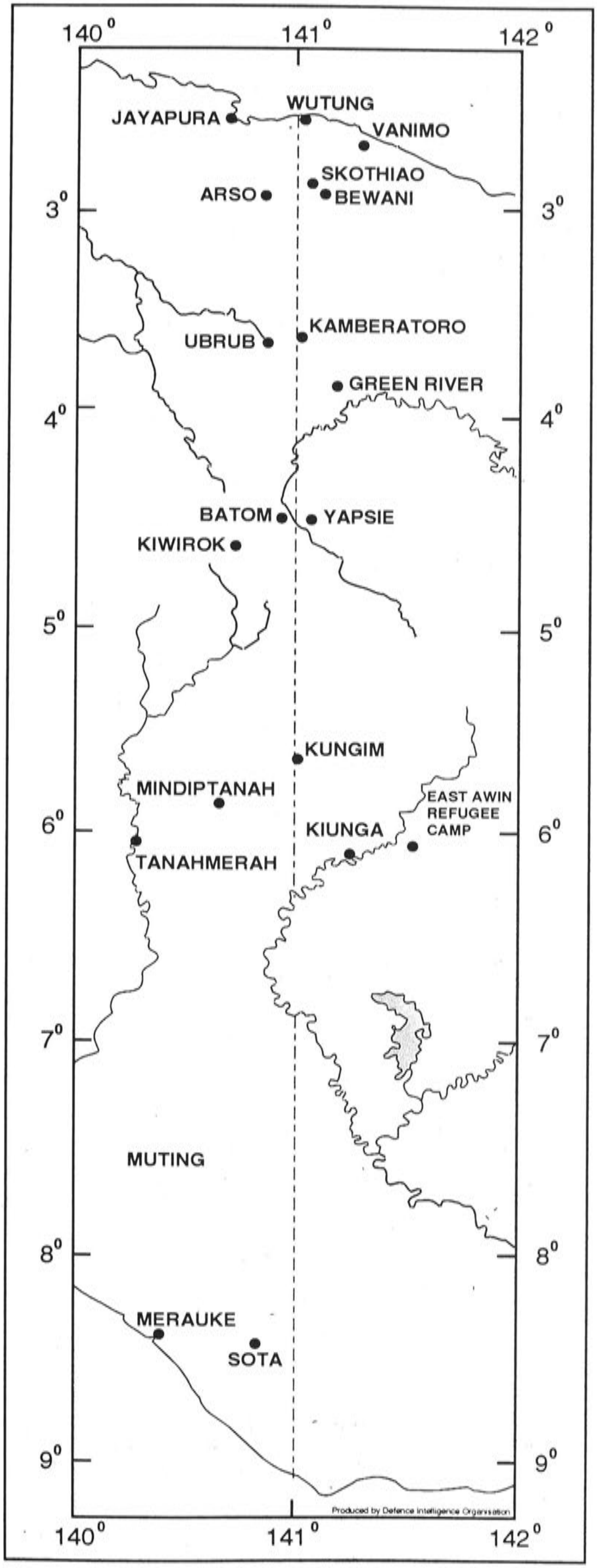
Indeed, PNG will put store in the Treaty with Indonesia, and in its relationship with Australia. PNG will inevitably see more in the JDP than Australia sees is the case, which could pose problems for Australia in the future. The sporadic activities of the OPM will add to tensions though the rebels' increasing tendency to resort to terrorist tactics, especially hostage-taking,[62] may undermine their cause.

For the PNGDF, there is little incentive to improve capabilities. Since 1984, its attention has been firmly focussed on internal security. In any event, the PNGDF cannot be committed to both border duties and internal security, as Bougainville has shown. As a result, intelligence, familiarity with the area, and local contacts will be eroded. The net effect will be an undermining of the PNGDF's capacity to mount effective border patrols — in spite of its long association with the area and the key role it plays in PNGDF history.

****

[62] Hostage taking by the OPM increased from 1996.

PNG-Irian Jaya Border Area



Appendix 2 to
Chapter 4

RPIR Border Patrols
1980-90
(Defence Reports 1980-90)

1980-1981

Patrols details not specified in Defence Reports for this period.

1982	*Taim Senis*	Imonda	
	Jumping Wallaby	Morehead	
	Longlong Magani	Kiunga	
	Go Isi	Amanab	
	Stretim Banis	Skotihao	
	Rausim Puripuri	Morehead	
	Painim Muruk	Bewani	
	Bel Isi	Imonda	
	Splitim Banis	Skotiahao	
1983	*Kokoda Tasol*	Ningerim	
	Painim Tarapia	Morehead	
	Painim Strong	Wutung	
	Painim Kuka	Aitape	
	Singirip Tumas	Bewani	

1984

No patrols listed in Defence Report for the period.

1985	*Sosobi*		Mar/Apr
	Sanap Isi		Jun/Jul
	Biku Gabua	Fly River bulge	Aug/Sep
	Yellow Bird II	Blackwater	Mar
	Rausim Kwik I&II	Bewani	Apr/May
	Rausim Kwik III	Wutung	
	Lukautim Wantok	Wutung	Jul

1986	*Rabia Gabuna*	Morehead/Weam	19 Mar - 8 Apr
	Biku Namo	Kiunga/Ningerum	
	White Seagull	Kiunga/Ningerum	
	Bushman	Wutung/Bewani	10 - 25 Jan
	Tully Gully	Green River	14 Aug - 3 Sep
	Blue Hills	Bewani	10 - 24 Dec
1987	*Back Track*	Ningerim	12 Apr - 2 May
	Crocodile Rock	Ningerim	19 Mar - 2 Apr
	Brukim Wara	Ningerim	20 Jun - 3 Jul
	Muddy Grass	Weam	1 Sep – 22 Sep
	Blue Hills	Ningerim	27 Oct - 12 Nov
	Northern Star	Bewani	4 - 25 Feb
	Frenim	Aitape	14 Apr - 6 May
	Luk Save	Green River	9 - 30 Jun
	Bushman	Bewani	11 - 31 Aug
	Emu Bob	Bewani	20 Nov - 20 Dec
1988	*Luk Save*	Ningerim	22 Jul - 1 Aug
	Brown Eagle	Weam/Bensbach	22 Nov - 13 Dec
	Christmas	Wutung/Bewani	4 - 25 Jan
	Silip Kirap	Green River	14 Mar – 5 Apr
	Apple Pie	Bewani/Skotiau	4 Apr - 27 May
	Blue Pin	Bewani/Skotiau	9 Oct - 9 Nov

1989

No patrols conducted due to Bougainville Operations

1990

No patrols conducted in southern border area.

Sandaun	Bewani	18 Jan - 1 Feb
Yellow River	Bewani	20 Jun - 28 Jul
Northern Eagle	Yapsie	18 Aug - 20 Sep
Shooting Star	Amanab	19 Nov - 10 Dec
Last Tango	Bewani	6 Dec - 15 Dec

Chapter 5

Changes in the Force

Introduction

The PNGDF entered the post-independence decade with ongoing commitments to border security and enjoyed a short-term deployment on operations in Vanuatu. However, soldiers would soon change their focus to internal security. As that prospect increased, the PNGDF would undergo a facelift, commencing in 1985. The changes involved would have a long-term effect on the Force, and would provide a measure of the extent to which the post-independence army could manage responsibilities under the Constitution. The nature of the changes and their impact on the PNGDF need to be understood as an important element in its history.

Equipment and organisational changes play important roles in the effectiveness of any army. In the case of the PNGDF, these changes would invariably affect the performance of the Force. At first glance, some of the changes appear to be largely cosmetic, such as uniform changes (See below). However, each new piece of equipment introduced into the army has a flow on effect. Uniforms impart a professional image and boost morale. New weapons and equipment affect training and logistic procedures. All changes have initial and follow-on costs and therefore impact on the Army budget. Equipment decisions cannot easily be made without a thorough examination of these effects. Rushed decisions rarely achieve the desired results and often burden the force with long-term problems. The first post-independence decision was the replacement of PNGDF uniforms. At the very least, the decision marked an important development in PNGDF history.

A Different Image

At independence, the PNGDF saw no need to change the uniforms worn by its soldiers since 1956. The juniper green uniform had a distinctly PNG association — members of the PIR and, later, the PNGDF, including Australian defence personnel posted to those units, had worn the uniform since its introduction. Stocks of juniper green uniforms were low and by 1985 new and

cheaper materials were available. They were easier to maintain and more comfortable in the tropical climate. Unlike the juniper uniform, the new uniform materials did not require starching. For these reasons the decision was made to replace the juniper uniform. The new uniforms included provision for separate colours for the Land Element (green), Air Element (blue) and the Maritime Element (white). The *Kumul* badge was retained. The new dress was introduced in September 1985 at a cost of K1.5 million (Post-Courier 3 May 1985: 2).

The replacement uniforms were popular with the soldiers. The decision to provide new uniforms, including new field uniforms, was timely and improved morale immeasurably. The soldiers had long complained of the lack of replacements. Even when spare uniforms were located in the supply system, the soldiers found the right sizes difficult to obtain. Uniforms were a fundamental piece of equipment for soldiers who were becoming increasingly critical of the poor logistic system. Importantly, the deteriorating state of army uniforms inhibited the maintenance of discipline. For example, in 1985-88, soldiers were observed in ill-fitting uniforms or wearing dress damaged by long-term use or exposure to the sun.[63] Officers would not order the soldiers to find replacements because they knew there were none. So corrective action on dress standards, and on long hair, poor shaving habits, cleanliness and so forth were also overlooked. The new uniforms were timely and beneficial for ceremonial reasons as well.[64]

The PNGDF was also investing in new equipment. The PNG government had exerted pressure on the commander to purchase three Israeli *Arava* 201 aircraft costing $US 9 million. The commander complied and the first aircraft arrived in the country in 1985. The *Arava* — the first example of PNGDF diversification from Australian-sourced equipment — could carry twelve armed soldiers. The aircraft's short take off and landing (STOL) characteristics made it particularly suited to operations in the rugged terrain of Papua New Guinea where airfields are short and often carved out of mountainsides with steep and

---

[63] Author's experience as the Military Adviser in 1 RPIR 1985-88.

[64] In 1984, plans were made for the presentation of new Regimental colours to each of the battalions, following the conferring of the title `Royal' on the Pacific Islands Regiment.

limited approaches. With its arrival, the *Arava* would become the third aircraft type in service with the PNGDF — the *Dakota* DC3 and the *Nomad* being the other two. The logistic burden of maintaining so many aircraft types in a small army was further compounded in later years.[65] Within two years of its arrival, Defence Minister Pokasui claimed that 'with no spare parts available, the *Arava* aircraft was useless' (Post-Courier 30 September 1987: 2).

The *Arava* had other problems. The tropical climate in Papua New Guinea reduced the life of the aircraft, which was designed more for operations in the Middle East. In addition, the aircraft had a limited troop and load carrying capacity. While the *Arava*'s landing and take off capabilities were valuable, its use in support of border operations was limited to reconnaissance and resupply. As a long-haul troop transport, the aircraft was economically inefficient.

Plans were also made for the acquisition of four 31.5 metre Pacific Patrol Boats (PPB) under the Australian Defence Co-operation Programme, at a total cost of K25 million. On 28 February 1987, HMPNGS *Tarangau* (01) was commissioned, becoming the first defence maritime vessel purchased since independence. In spite of the PPB's superiority over the aging *Attack* class patrol boats, the new boats attracted criticism from the PNGDF. Concerns centered on the lack of air-conditioning; the craft's limited range; susceptibility to rough weather; and inadequate armament — 7.62mm, 30mm or 50mm machine guns. In time, that criticism would threaten the defence relationship.

Australia agreed to fit air-conditioners to each boat but the other problems persisted. In 1991, the PNGDF overcame the armament problem by purchasing the *Oerlikon* cannon, an automatic weapon, for each boat. The cost of each round of ammunition for the *Oerlikon* was K400 at 1989 prices; an expense the PNGDF could ill afford.

Organisation

The PNGDF introduced its first organisational change since independence in August 1980. Approval was given for the creation of a Military Plans Branch

---

[65] The PNGDF acquired four *Iroquois* helicopters in 1989 and two *Casa* aircraft in 1992.

(Defence Report 1984/85: 24).[66] The newly created branch was tasked with the creation of a strategic plan for the development of the Force, taking into account future roles. The branch had an inauspicious beginning. Colonel Tau Nauna (Central Province), appointed to head the branch, resigned in 1982. His successor, Colonel Paul Soma (NSP) resigned in 1984. Lieutenant Colonel Karry Frank (Central Province) assumed acting responsibilities in February 1984 before being replaced by Colonel Rockus Lokinap (New Ireland Province) in June 1984. Lokinap had only two other officers on his staff — the branch establishment of 12 was never filled.

The many changes and lack of staff hampered the development of a strategic plan. Still, the branch could point to two notable successes in strategic planning: the 1988 White Paper which served as 'the basis for the formulation of the PNGDF Concept of Operations, and the Force Structure' (Defence White Paper 1988: 1), and the creation of a Defence Intelligence Branch.

The 1988 White Paper represented an important benchmark for PNG and the PNGDF in determining the future of the Force. The Paper gave rise to a Ten Year Development Plan, an ambitious programme for the expansion of the PNGDF, and a proposal to provide personnel for UN duties.[67] The Plan was heralded with much fanfare by the then Defence Minister, Arnold Marsipal. He noted that the plan was the first white paper on the defence of Papua New Guinea since independence. The Defence Paper concluded that a major threat to the security of Papua New Guinea was not likely in the foreseeable future. However, the threat of `minor skirmishes' (ibid.: 6) was not ruled out. The government also recognised that the PNGDF needed modernisation so that the army had a defence capability without external assistance.

The Defence Report laid the groundwork for an expansion of the force, and the provision of new equipment, including aircraft, naval craft and new weapons. The PNGDF senior leadership now had the necessary blueprint from

---

[66] A proposal put forward by Colonel Francis, an Australian officer then PNGDF Chief of Staff.
[67] The PNGDF, aware of the Fijian role in UN deployments, were attracted by the prospect of overseas experience — and the UN pay and conditions.

government as the basis for its training, equipment purchasing schedule, and budgeting plans. Yet in spite of the government's recognition of PNGDF needs and its agreement for expansion and equipment purchases, senior officers were critical of the document. That criticism would not surface until the 1990s, when a rationalisation of the PNGDF was undertaken with the assistance of consultants.[68]

In an internal report, PNGDF officers commented that the defence priorities in the White Paper had doubtful validity for Papua New Guinea's strategic outlook (discussion Colonel Bau-Maras (Chief of Plans) of 19 April 1996). The core force concept was criticised and officers questioned the claim that considerable warning would occur in the event of a threat. In particular, officers were critical of the outside influence that had given rise to the White Paper. That thinly-veiled reference to Australian involvement in the preparation of the White Paper reflected long-held PNGDF views that Australia played too much of a role in PNG internal affairs.

The Report had been prepared with the assistance of the Australian Defence Department. Australian defence officials had been concerned by the PNGDF's increasing involvement in internal security, the poor state of preparedness of the PNGDF, and the lack of a clearly defined commitment by the PNG government to its defence force — in spite of its increasing reliance on the army for internal stability (See Chapter 6). Australian Defence officials could also offer the benefit of their experience in the preparation of defence white papers. Yet, in spite of these factors, the PNGDF leadership questioned assessments made in the 1988 White Paper.

Notwithstanding the government's endorsement of the White Paper, the PNGDF criticism was justified on some issues. The government had agreed that without an expansion from 3050 to 5200, the PNGDF could not meet its responsibilities for external and internal defence, including border security, and civic action. (That argument was central to the PNGDF review conducted in 1990-92, which recommended a modest expansion and the provision of basic

---

[68] For more detail on the review refer to Dibb and Nicholas (1996).

equipment and weapons.) In the absence of concerted action to address those concerns, the Force was ill-prepared for the Bougainville unrest in 1988.

The 1988 report was flawed in other respects. The Paper provided the basis for force expansion but ruled out any threat of invasion. Defence argued for a higher manpower ceiling than the existing 5200, but provided no figures. The proposed expansion identified the need for new units but gave no breakdown of costs. The government endorsed the White Paper in principle but insisted on approving detailed proposals. PNGDF officers chose to ignore the subtleties of the government's decision. The officer corps was attracted to some elements of the plan, largely because of its promise of expansion and, with it, the purchase of new equipment, including fighter aircraft and artillery.

The other major organisational achievement was the creation of a Defence Intelligence Branch (See also Dorney 1990: 208). In 1988, Defence set about amalgamating all existing intelligence sections (Defence Report 1988: 50). A Defence Intelligence Branch (DIB) would `prepare strategic assessments, ... and provide dedicated intelligence support for PNGDF operations' (ibid.:). The change proved timely. On Bougainville the following year, the PNGDF found it was poorly served by the National Intelligence Organisation (NIO). The DIB assumed a greater role, well beyond that of military intelligence, in an attempt to make up for NIO deficiencies. Indeed, plans were made for DIB representation similar to that on Bougainville in provinces on the mainland, in addition to the border posts at Kiunga and Vanimo. Manning restrictions and Bougainville commitments prevented those proposals being implemented. On Bougainville, DIB personnel were implicated in controversial practices, including the abuse of human rights (See Chapter 7).

Changes at the Top

Brigadier-General Diro remained commander for six years after independence. He survived two changes of government, a feat not matched by any of his successors. Diro's retention reinforced the army's political impartiality and its loyalty to the government of the day. However, after 1981 the commander would change four times in five years. That would see the appointment

increasingly politicised with less emphasis on promotion on merit. Successive commanders promoted to the position would, in turn, promote others within the Force to ensure loyalty. The process would undermine the PNGDF's independence and confidence within the rank and file in their leadership.

The frequent changes in commander would also divide the officer corps into factions. A culture of alliances would become all-pervasive, often to the detriment of Force efficiency. These factions would work against each other, ignoring their leadership responsibilities for the smooth running of the Force. The officers' actions were no different to what had already occurred in the bureaucracy. However, factionalisation began to impact on the PNGDF at a time when the government was dependent on the army for internal stability. The leadership weaknesses would not be exposed immediately because law and order operations required only small elements of the PNGDF. Later, on Bougainville, the cracks in the officer structure became more pronounced and PNGDF performance faltered.

The growing gap between the PNGDF hierarchy and its soldiery meant that officers could no longer rule out the threat of military action against the state. The circumstances, which were tested in Cabinet's 1977 disciplinary action against Brigadier-General Diro (Chapter 2), had changed. Problems within the officer corps began to emerge in 1984 with the resignation of Colonel Huai. At the time, Huai was critical of the then PNGDF commander, Brigadier-General Noga. That criticism stemmed from Huai's belief that the government was imposing decisions which were detrimental to the effectiveness of the PNGDF (Post-Courier 25 Jan 85: 2). The *Arava* purchase was a case in point. Huai believed that Noga should have withstood the pressure. Commanders, he argued, needed to assert their position more when it came to operational issues.

Several senior officers in the PNGDF shared Huai's view. Two followed Huai's lead in resigning from the Force — Colonels Jack Maniana (Chief of Logistics) and Paul Soma (Head, Policy and Planning). The resignations and the barrage of public criticism unsettled the government. The Defence Intelligence Branch and the NIO were tasked to investigate the unrest. They concluded that

the situation `threatened the stability of the Force' (Post-Courier 22 April 1985: 2). The assessment was exaggerated, though ethnic tensions arising from the conflict between Huai and his supporters, and those who stayed loyal to Noga, were of concern. In this instance, the two camps were predominantly Papuan; in later years, ethnic background decided the allegiances of many officers and soldiers (See later in this chapter). In time the issue settled, but the government was uneasy, uncertain of PNGDF loyalty. So was the Opposition. When, in November 1985, a change of government occurred, following a no-confidence vote, the incoming prime minister, Paias Wingti, appointed Huai as commander.

Wingti's action confirmed in the minds of many the role of politics in the appointment of commander. Huai had, in 1985, openly supported a political party (PPP) then in coalition with Wingti's Peoples Democratic Party (PDM) and had declared publicly his intention to run in the 1987 election. Through his actions, he was inextricably linked to the Wingti/Chan coalition, thereby ensuring his future in the PNGDF when the coalition gained power.

Notwithstanding his early standing with Wingti, Huai was replaced in late 1987. According to then Defence Minister, Pokasui, Huai `had allowed infighting and political lobbying among senior officers' (May et al. 1998: 164). Brigadier-General Lokinap, a New Irelander, was appointed on 11 January 1988. In a wider reshuffle coinciding with the commander's appointment, the government also stood down Colonels Dademo, Dotaona and Guria — all Papuan officers. That decision stemmed from August 1987, when James Pokasui, a former PNGDF captain and an Islander, assumed the portfolio of defence minister. Many saw Lokinap's appointment by Pokasui as Islander influence in the new government. Other appointments within the officer corps seemed to lend weight to the allegations. For example, Colonel Nuia, from East New Britain, was appointed Chief of Operations. Leader of the Opposition, Sir Michael Somare, slammed the government's decision to remove the Papuan officers, noting it `smacked of some form of payback' (Post-Courier 15 January 1988: 2). Denials of regionalism did little to dampen criticism. In its defence, the government claimed that the Papuan officers lacked loyalty, but this merely heightened public concern about the

potential for PNGDF action against the state. That concern could be traced to events in Fiji.

The Fiji coups earlier that year had prompted many in Papua New Guinea, especially within the government, to be alert to signs of unrest in the PNGDF. Public concern was heightened by speculation in PNGDF units about the army's ability to mount a coup following the Fiji example (ibid.: 2). The Opposition fuelled debate, claiming that poor morale and a lack of funds could lead to a coup. Wingti claimed that stability, loyalty, lack of popular support, and the dispersed nature of the PNGDF ruled out any possibility of a coup (ibid.: 1). Yet the government was worried: approval had already been given for the call-out of the troops for a new law and order operation (*Green Beret 87)*; so the army's loyalty to the government was paramount.

The Fiji coups caught the attention of the PNGDF as they did for many in the region at the time. Discussion of the issue within the PNGDF mirrored discussions taking place in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. The officers and men of the PNGDF units expressed surprise and shock at the military takeover in Fiji and conversation came around to the parallels which could be drawn between the Fiji Military Forces and the PNGDF. Some members of the PNGDF claimed they could replicate events in Fiji if the need arose. Others gained satisfaction from the jolt given to the PNG government and the likelihood that the army would receive more consideration in the formulation of the budget. A happy soldiery, they argued, would be less likely to stage a coup.

Certainly, many would have been surprised if the discussion of coups by the military had not taken place. However, there was not evident in the discussions cohesive support for any such action by the PNGDF. Indeed, the discussion tended to be concentrated in small groups of common rank or ethnic background. In all that, the professionalism of the PNGDF was not at risk, even as other standards were in decline. Nevertheless, the murmurings — fuelled, in my view, by experiences during law and order operations — would ultimately stir the PNGDF into action, during pay riots in 1989 (See Chapter 7).

While the debate continued in the PNGDF and elsewhere, the government was moving to shore up its hold on the military. The PNGDF officer corps was scrutinised to identify potential coup leaders. The CPC had noted at independence that coup instigators usually came from below the senior ranks. The PNG government concluded that Colonel Nuia[69] was the most likely to lead a coup (personal communication Colonel Nuia of 15 October 1996). Australian defence analysis bore out the government's suspicions. In an intelligence assessment prepared at the time and passed to the PNG government, Colonel Nuia was identified as a coup risk (ibid.). Nuia was called before the NEC, which demanded a reaffirmation of his loyalty. Surprised at the claim — in his view he had given the government no reason to doubt his loyalty — Nuia confirmed his loyalty to the government of the day. No more came of the matter. However, Nuia never forgot Australia's role in this embarrassing issue. He remains suspicious of Australia's involvement in PNG.

The events of 1987, and subsequent publicity, promoted regionalism within the PNGDF. Within the framework of suspicion and rumour, individual servicemen turned increasingly to *wantoks*, voicing their discontent. As politicians surrounded themselves with their supporters in the bureaucracy and in the PNGDF, so too did the army officers. In the process, professionalism was eaten away, with poor performance protected by senior allies in government. Initiative and commitment gave way to other priorities concerned with consolidating positions of power. This had ramifications for the Australia/PNG defence relationship.

PNG-Australia Bilateral Relations

As the PNGDF committed to law and order operations, relations with Australia, and with the Australian Defence Force in particular, were undergoing changes. Such relations had been changing steadily since independence. Relatively large numbers of ADF personnel were still serving in the PNGDF. However, attitudes within the PNGDF leadership towards Australia were changing as younger soldiers, with only dim memories of the pre-independence

---

[69] Colonel Nuia was appointed PNGDF Commander in May 1997.

period, joined the Force. The training of PNG officers exclusively in PNG since 1975 also changed attitudes towards Australia.

Relations had earlier been strained by the PNGDF's Vanuatu experience (See Chapter 3). The Australian government's attempt to dissuade PNG from committing a contingent to Vanuatu, and Australia's hesitation in supporting the *Kumul* Force,[70] did little for defence and foreign relations between the two countries (discussion Brigadier-General Nuia 1 August 2001). Chan felt strongly about PNG's right to determine its role in the region. If necessary, Chan had been prepared to go it alone. In the event, that was not necessary, but relations in the mid 1980s were on a different footing and, with several new appointees having held the commander's position between 1981 and 1985, the process of change would continue. Certainly, since 1985 many in the PNGDF felt relations with Australia had not been good.

PNG's commitment of the PNGDF to internal security operations from 1984 presented a dilemma for the Australian government and the ADF. Both were uneasy about the role of its personnel in internal security. At the time, the ADF had not been used in any similar role in Australia for many years.[71] Policy governing ADF duties in PNG stipulated that defence personnel were not to be involved in operations or training associated with internal security. That policy arose from ministerial consultations in 1977 which set down conditions for the use of ADF personnel in `politically sensitive situations' (Gubb 1994: 31). Those guidelines caused particular problems for the bilateral relationship in the run-up to the Vanuatu deployment.

ADF training officers were serving in the RPIR. The restrictions were to affect profoundly their value to the Papua New Guinea commanding officers. Within the RPIR, 50 per cent of training was devoted to internal security tactics. That meant that while ADF training officers played a key role in training for counter-insurgency war, they were prevented from assisting with internal security

---

[70] Australia was `nervous about the operation, but eventually provided logistic support' (JCFADT 1991: 163).

[71] The ADF was called out in 1978 to provide security for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) after a bomb exploded outside the Hilton hotel in Sydney.

training. (The Australian Government recognised, belatedly in 1991, the need for `Australian assistance to ... [promote] the development of the PNGDF to aid the civil power' [JCFADT 1991: 160]). The PNGDF also held the view that as the ADF did not have experience in internal security, there was little they could offer to units on this issue. The training officers were also prevented from involvement in border operations, including deployments. Canberra strictly controlled ADF visits to the PNG/Indonesian border area, and where these were approved, the duration and location of visits were limited (See Chapter 4). By 1986, the conditional use of the ADF in the infantry battalions, combined with the ADF policy on localisation, led to the withdrawal of the last training officers.[72]

Aside from the role of ADF staff, other changes were taking place. The ADF adopted a policy of disengagement from its long-term presence, preferring short-term options. That policy reinforced PNGDF views at the time that Australia was cutting back on defence assistance. The decision in December 1985 that ADF personnel should wear Australian defence uniforms rather than those of the PNGDF underscored PNGDF perceptions that Australia was distancing itself from the longstanding relationship. Eventually, concessions were made by Australia for those personnel posted to line positions within the PNGDF — largely technical or specialist support areas — to wear the *Kumul* badge on their Australian uniforms. Nonetheless, the PNGDF believed that the linkages were being eroded.

Diversification

The changes in PNGDF/ADF relations went well beyond the uniform issue. Nor were the changes restricted to the defence relationship. PNG politicians were reassessing the bilateral relationship. New generations of politicians, many of whom were well educated, enjoyed public appeal by exploiting nationalist sentiment. They sought to counter Australian influence — real or imagined — by seeking new bilateral relationships with neighbours such as Indonesia, and wider afield. The government's policies on bilateral issues

---

[72] In December 1988, I completed duties as the military adviser in 1 RPIR — the last Australian Army officer to serve with the PIR since its formation in 1940.

invariably influenced PNGDF attitudes. Some government policies, such as the purchase of the *Arava* from Israel, impacted directly on the PNGDF.

Australia was quick to point out that PNG, as an independent state, had the right to seek new links, in defence as elsewhere. Australia encouraged PNGDF diversification, which would reduce its dependence on the Defence Co-operation Programme. (Diversification was a general trend in third world armies with a decline in single military aid dependency (Janowitz 1964: 71).) Australian defence policy also encouraged the PNGDF and the PNG Defence Department to assume responsibility for maintenance of the multi-million-dollar defence installations built by Australia prior to independence. By doing so, PNG would be responsible for all aspects of defence, including capital works. However, Australia reserved the right to restrict PNG's use of defence co-operation funds to purchase military hardware from other countries.

Australian defence planners intended that PNG, where it pursued diversification and the acquisition of new military hardware, would come to appreciate fully the complexity of military materiel management. The costs of such equipment went beyond initial purchase costs. Maintenance and training were affected. These needed to be addressed by PNG in the equipment proposals. Australia wanted PNG's Department of Defence to assume responsibility for maintenance and the routine equipping of its soldiers. In the event, the rationalisation needed to provide for the Force's operational needs within budget limitations was not forthcoming. Australia's defence policy objectives would only be possible if the defence assistance programme met the initial high construction costs of projects, such as the reconstruction of the naval wharf at Lombrum on Manus Island.

Two other notable projects — the construction of a medical facility at Taurama Barracks and the Air Transport Squadron facilities at Jackson's Airport in Port Moresby — were set up during 1986-87. While the Defence Co-operation Programme paid the lion's share of the costs, these facilities were not constructed exclusively by Australians. The ADF encouraged PNGDF supervision, and counterpart funding for some of the buildings. The PNGDF gained valuable

experience while the Defence budget contributed to the facilities' cost. Even so, budget mismanagement in the PNGDF caused difficulties in counterpart funding.

The Taurama Hospital Project provides a useful subject for examination of the Defence Co-operation Programme in the late 1980s. The project, designed in consultation with the PNGDF (Director of Health Services and his staff), recognised the poor state of medical facilities within the PNGDF. The new facility was to provide two operating rooms, complete with pre-operative waiting areas and a post-operative recovery ward. The project design included the provision of medical equipment. Overall, the cost was $A1 million. A combined ADF/PNGDF engineer team carried out construction and the facility was opened in early 1987. The facility was closed after the opening ceremony and remained so for several years until it was converted into a maternity care ward for dependents. The medical facility, which was the most modern in PNG, was never fully utilised. The problems were apparent even during construction.

The principal problem was the availability of medical officers within the PNGDF, especially specialist officers such as anaesthetists. Medical officers were enticed from the PNGDF by the private sector. Specialists were always difficult to recruit. So the facility could not be used for want of qualified local staff. Another problem related to health standards. The area had to be maintained free of contamination to reduce the risk of infection. This was not done because the facility was not used. In time, the cost to the PNGDF of decontamination was prohibitive. The PNGDF also disputed the appropriateness of the hospital layout, even though the design was a joint undertaking. This latter problem appears to have arisen as the PNGDF came under pressure to use the facility. Still, the infrastructure created at Taurama and elsewhere was valuable.

The projects provided experience for the ADF and created facilities capable of supporting ADF units operating in PNG. The facilities were high profile, tangible evidence of the contribution made by the Defence Co-operation Programme to the development of the PNGDF. The defence co-operation focus on these areas should have released PNGDF finance for the equipment of its units — uniforms, radios, vehicles and weapons. All too often these were not replaced.

Preference was given instead to other purchases, with serious long-term implications for the PNG defence budget. A case in point was the purchase of two Spanish *Casa* aircraft in 1990. Decisions such as these reduced funds for soldiers and caused morale in units to decline; it also undermined the capacity of the PNGDF to conduct operations — a combination, which was to be more exposed on Bougainville in 1989.

Since 1979, Australian military units had exercised in PNG with PNGDF elements. Pre-independence links between Australian infantry units (the Royal Australian Regiment) and the PIR continued with annual exercises. Some PIR units also participated in army exercises in Australia. In the main, joint exercises, which utilised Australian air support, were conducted in PNG. Exercises such as *Wantok Warrior* (company level training), *Paradise* (a naval exercise) and *Night Falcon* (special forces) became regular events.

The joint exercises gave ADF units an opportunity to train outside Australia in terrain which tested operational procedures and unit capabilities. There is no doubt that the training was valuable for the ADF. Australia recognised the ongoing benefits for the ADF with the JCFADT noting these in their report for that year (1991: 13). The PNGDF benefited as well, with troops able to widen their knowledge of equipment and procedures. In addition, the soldiers were able to use — at no cost — ADF aircraft and logistic facilities. However, the benefits for the PNGDF declined as their numbers participating in the exercise were reduced. As a result, the justification for ADF exercises in PNG was undermined.

In 1987, exercises *Wantok Warrior* and *Night Falcon*, which were conducted separately, did not take place. The cancellation was due to the PNGDF's inability to participate due to commitments to Operation *Green Beret 87*. Another key factor was the strain in the defence relationship arising from Australia's decision, announced in 1986, to reduce its defence aid (Defence Report 1986: 8). For their part, Australian defence policy makers thought it prudent — especially in a PNG election year — to avoid defence exercises in PNG which did not involve the PNGDF. To ignore this issue would have called

into question the state of PNG's internal stability and the PNGDF's capacity to deal with internal problems.

By 1988, the exercises had resumed but another law and order operation — *LOMET 88* — and commitments to national disaster assistance prevented a more active role for the PNGDF in that year. Ultimately, only a handful of soldiers was made available for these exercises. The following year the PNGDF was fully committed to Bougainville. The combined exercise programme had, by 1986, all but disappeared (JCFADT 1996 FADT 54). Aside from the PNGDF's inability to cope with the added burden of joint exercises, political concern in Canberra over Australian units exercising in PNG with a secessionist war on Bougainville prevented ADF deployments.

That marked the end of exchange exercises with Australia. Contact with the ADF was subsequently limited to those attending courses in Australia or those working with ADF members posted to the PNGDF. The training of PNGDF soldiers in Australia, and the recommencement of officer training for PNGDF cadets in Australia from 1985, maintained contact between the PNGDF and the ADF. (Similar PNGDF training occurred in other countries, including the United States, Indonesia, Malaysia and New Zealand. However, the numbers attending courses in those countries were substantially less than those in Australia.)

The cancellation of exchange exercises in 1987, with implications for the bilateral relationship, seemed out of character with events of that year. A new government, headed by Prime Minister Wingti, was formed after the June elections. One of its initiatives was to formalise bilateral relations with Australia. A treaty, later called the Joint Declaration of Principles (JDP), was proposed by Wingti to establish formally the nature of Australia/PNG relations. Prime Ministers Hawke and Wingti signed the agreement on 9 December 1987. PNG saw in the agreement a commitment by Australia to defend PNG from attack by a hostile foreign power. Australia did not see that responsibility as unconditional.

Australia had in mind the potential problems posed by any expansionist threat from Indonesia. The potential for low-level tensions arising along the PNG/Indonesian border was a key area of concern. Indeed, that concern had

prompted the expansion of the PIR in 1957 (See Chapters 2 and 4). However, the Australian government did not want to be drawn into a confrontation with Indonesia within the framework of the JDP. Nor did it want PNG to act irresponsibly because it had the backing of a larger regional power. Wingti recognised the potential problems posed by Indonesia but he did not rely on the JDP. Indeed, even before its signing, he had concluded a Treaty of Mutual Respect, Co-operation and Friendship with Indonesia in March 1987 (See Chapter 4). Under that agreement, the two countries agreed to close liaison, especially along their common border, and consultation.

Localisation

Since self-government in 1973, a process of localisation had been underway in the PNGDF. Localisation was the term given to the gradual replacement of Australians within the PNGDF by Papua New Guineans. The pace of localisation was determined by the availability of suitable Papua New Guineans with the qualifications or skills to do the job. In the infantry battalions, localisation was achieved rapidly; even commanding officers were localised, beginning with the appointment of then Lieutenant Colonel Diro in 1974. In the technical areas, especially in supervisory positions, however, localisation was a slower process because PNG officers lacked experience in rank and qualifications. Effective supervisory skills took time to acquire.

By independence a degree of localisation had been achieved. However, there were problems with localisation, which would impact on the PNGDF. As part of localisation planning, suitable replacements for Australians were identified from among the Papua New Guineans. In some cases, the choice was made simple because few individuals were suitably qualified to assume the responsibility. Little effort was made to ensure that a group of more junior, less experienced Papua New Guineans was available to provide future appointments. Many suitable individuals left for other employment, especially when faced with relatively young incumbents in the top job and little prospect of promotion. Others were enticed by private enterprise and the prospect of better pay as the country's economy grew.

The second (and third) tier of qualified soldiers was important to the formation and maintenance of a post-independent army. By the 1980s, the loss of these individuals was posing problems for the PNGDF. The first group of Papua New Guineans in the key positions was moving on or finding problems in carrying out their responsibilities due to the lack of qualified assistants. In some areas of the PNGDF, especially support elements, ADF personnel were posted to the subordinate positions to maintain services — in effect a process of delocalisation. Papua New Guineans accepted the system. Indeed, senior officers preferred using junior ADF personnel to having ADF advisers of equal rank. Still, the use of Australians was largely a band-aid solution to a more deep-seated problem. Ultimately, the success of localisation depended on depth within the PNGDF, with Papua New Guineans at every level. As more qualified defence personnel — medical officers, pilots and technicians — were enticed to the private sector with the promise of higher wages, especially in the lucrative mining sector, the PNGDF began to suffer. The problems were to surface with the Bougainville deployment in 1989.

The policy of localisation had been initiated before independence. The statistics (Figure 5.1) show an active and consistent policy of replacing Australian defence personnel with Papua New Guineans, who by the mid-1980s commanded all units of the PNGDF. However, not until 1986 did the cost of loan personnel cease to be `the most significant cost in the defence assistance programme' (Defence Report 1986: 7). This proved to be an important factor in PNG/Australian relations. The PNGDF had been concerned that assistance was being restricted so long as funds were being used to pay the salaries of ADF personnel in country. The PNGDF wanted to reduce ADF numbers and so gain access to the funds. That became their motivation in supporting a more rapid localisation rate, which, ultimately, undermined the PNGDF's effectiveness.

Figure 5.1

Localisation 1980-1990

(Defence Reports 1980-90)

Year	No. of Australians
1980	160
1981	140
1982	114
1983	99
1984	74
1985	52
1986	60
1987	39
1988	20
1989	15
1990	29

For Australian defence policy planners, localisation proved useful in measuring the effectiveness of the defence assistance programme. The planners could point to a reduction of 131 Australian Defence personnel in the PNGDF between 1980 and 1990. In spite of the rapid rate of localisation, Australian defence officials denied that PNGDF effectiveness had been put at risk, confident that PNGDF problems were not well known outside of defence circles. Reports of the Defence Co-operation Programme glossed over many of the emerging problems. The ADF pointed to the success of defence co-operation in creating an increasingly independent PNGDF. That explains why, even within the ADF, so many were shocked by the appalling performance of the contingent on Bougainville. The declining ADF presence was not reflected in annual DC expenditure which, until 1992, showed a steady increase (Figure 5.2). Defence Cooperation Programme funding varied annually according to defence priorities that year. However, an indicative breakdown (based on FY 1993/94) (Department of Defence 1994) was:

- training, including exchanges – 40%;
- ADF personnel, including loan and project staff – 55%;
- mapping operations – 2%;
- support for Pacific Patrol Boat – 1%; and
- aircraft maintenance – 2%

Figure 5.2

Defence Co-operation Programme-Expenditure

(Defence Co-operation 1985: Annex H)

Year	A$m
1980	14.2
1981	15.2
1982	16.7
1983	17.3
1984	16.4
1985	16.0
1986	22.9
1987	24.3
1988	27.4
1989	27.4
1990	37.9[73]

Australian defence policy planners responsible for defence co-operation in the 1980s, especially in the period 1985-90, must accept some of the blame. Even when the ADF managed to turn around declining capabilities, the PNGDF command unwittingly undermined the gains. One example arose from PNGDF participation in Australia's bi-centennial celebrations.

As Australia approached its bicentennial year, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) planned a military tattoo as its contribution to the celebrations. Given the strong historical links with the ADF, the PNGDF was invited to commit

---

[73] Defence aid grew to $52m in 1992 but thereafter declined. By 2001, the aid level was $12m.

a military band for a six-month tour of Australia. The band was drawn from the Band Platoons of 1 and 2 RPIR.

However, while the band was in Australia, Headquarters PNGDF made the decision to reform the platoons on their return as the PNGDF Band Platoon and place the sub-unit under Headquarter's command rather than return the bandsmen to their former battalions. So ended a thirty-four year tradition with the commanding officers of both battalions losing the band platoons from their establishment. The battalions also lost an important medical capability — all bandsmen were trained as stretcher bearers. When 1 RPIR deployed to Bougainville in 1989, the absence of the bandsmen/stretcher bearers reduced the unit's capacity to provide emergency medical attention to casualties. The bandsmen who stayed behind in Port Moresby, were left to play at the funerals of PNGDF casualties.

The reasons for the demise of the PNGDF since independence — in spite of substantial defence aid assistance from Australia — are a subject of special interest. Arguments dating back to the Second World War maintained that an indigenous force lacked the qualities needed for a professional army. Others suggested that *wantokism* and the factional nature of the army militated against a cohesive army. Australia has long been conscious of these problems but held to the belief that strict discipline combined with education, sustained training and border patrolling would strengthen the force. By holding to that belief, Australia produced an enviable professional army by 1975, capably commanded by indigenous officers, albeit supported by a core element of ADF personnel.

Yet the PNGDF has been in decline since independence in spite of Australian assistance which, by 1991, amounted to more than $500 million (JCFADT 1991: 175). One of the reasons for that decline has been the failure of the PNGDF to assume the role of ADF personnel. In the late 1970s/ early 1980s, Australians held key line positions in the command structure and were present in all PNGDF units. They literally ensured strong command of the Force. Localisation saw the numbers of Australian personnel decline, coinciding with a change for the ADF staff remaining from command positions to advisory

positions. Those changes effectively saw a decline in Australian influence. At some point around 1982-84, the number of Australians fell below a critical point beyond which their numbers collectively could no longer arrest or even slow the decline in PNGDF capabilities. Nevertheless, Australia — encouraged by the PNGDF hierarchy anxious to reduce Australian influence — did not waiver from its policy of reducing ADF personnel in the PNGDF. Still, Canberra was prepared to try other options.

Some in the Australian military argued that training PNGDF members in Australia would inculcate in the soldiers discipline and professional standards. Those standards could then be integrated in the PNGDF on their return. Few would dispute the value of Australian training. But the standards were simply not put into effect in PNG because the Force lacked the collective will to impose such standards. In the words of one officer, returning after graduation at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, once you step on PNG soil, professional standards in the PNGDF have no currency.

Many former ADF advisers, including myself, hold to the view that the PNGDF can only be turned around by the presence — in sufficient numbers — of Australian servicemen in line positions in PNGDF units. Further, I would argue that reform of the PNGDF would also depend on the appointment of a commander with a reputation for strong discipline, and a capacity to withstand political influence in all its forms. That approach would test the political will of any PNG government but the absence of such a decision increases the prospect of military intervention.

Localisation was appropriate policy. However, the process should have been dependent on monitoring and evaluation of PNGDF capabilities. The dogged reduction in ADF personnel, regardless of the consequences, played a part in the collapse of the Force as a professional army. Australian efforts to influence change in the absence of a significant presence within the PNGDF, through a more mature relationship, and through foreign and defence policy mechanisms, were ineffective alternatives. That led to an increasing tendency to make aid conditional, for example, on improved human rights or reductions in the Force.

However, conditional aid alienated the PNGDF, undermining any effectiveness Australia's approach may have yielded. By the late 1990s, Australia was faced with little choice but to reduce aid and, by so doing, lose any remaining opportunities to bring about change in the Force.

The changing focus of ADF financial aid was another factor which played a role in the problems of the PNGDF. Early assistance was directed at infrastructure development and maintenance, and defence budget support. Australia moved away from these areas in the late 1980s in order to make the PNGDF more responsible for its management — and for the costs associated with that responsibility. Program aid became the new approach with Australian assistance targetted to specific projects, coupled with an insistence on counterpart funding. The PNGDF with its budget already strained by law and order operations often failed to meet its obligations for counterpart funding. Australian aid levels invariably dropped substantially; in some cases the inability of the PNGDF to contribute any counterpart funding saw proposed projects abandoned, leading to a decline in the quality of defence infrastructure.

Australian defence aid since independence has suffered the disadvantage of many aid programmes in that aid, without a strong capacity to influence and implement towards specific objectives, fell short of making the PNGDF a viable organisation. Australian/PNG defence relations were bound to come under pressure. For its part, the PNGDF faced other problems.

Ex-servicemen-A Policy Saga

In January 1979, the defence minister proposed a once-only compensation payment to Papua New Guinean war veterans (Defence Report 1980/81: 7). The proposal acknowledged the long-held view that veterans had not been adequately paid for their services, even during the war when they received less than the Australian servicemen — an issue which led to tensions (See Chapter 2). The NEC approved the proposal, directing the minister for defence to fund the scheme (K3 million) and make the gratuity payments over a number of years.

In the initial proposal, 4500 of the original 9000 ex-servicemen were to receive payments according to their rank. In October 1979, the gratuity payments

were extended to include police veterans awarded military campaign medals (during the Second World War) (Defence Report 1979: 8). Public pressure further forced the NEC to authorise payments to the relatives of deceased veterans. Subsequently, PNGDF ex-servicemen joined the chorus of those seeking compensation. Through their links with serving soldiers, they encouraged the rank and file to support them. As the number of claimants increased, tensions grew between the Department of Defence and veterans and their families, and between ex-servicemen of the PNGDF and serving personnel. Public sympathy, including from many related to former carriers, formed behind the veterans. Ex-servicemen saw an opportunity to press their claims. These proved a major cause for ex-servicemen's support in the 1989 pay riots (See Chapter 6). Grievances were carried into the 1990s.

The problems with disgruntled ex-servicemen were fuelled by the Wingti government's decision in 1987 to reduce PNGDF numbers to the authorised ceiling of 3050. The PNGDF issued guidelines for units to identify individuals for discharge so that the PNGDF could accord with the government ceiling. Some 347 personnel were identified (Defence Report 1987: 31) among the many soldiers who were medically unfit, past retirement age, or had presented disciplinary problems. In the latter case, those soldiers who faced seven charges or more for discipline were identified for discharge.

Discharges were not handled efficiently, with many soldiers, including disciplinary cases, sitting in Taurama Barracks awaiting discharge because funds for their repatriation could not be found. (Suggestions that legal impediments prevented the discharge of soldiers were incorrect. The Commander, PNGDF, has the power of dismissal, subject to the natural justice provisions of the Constitution. Importantly, courts martial may be conducted against PNGDF personnel with provision under the Constitution for the appointment of a National Court judge, contrary to the JCFADT (1991: 165) view that the Force cannot hold court martials [Discussion Counsel, PNG Ombudsman Commission of 31 July 2001]). The group caused many problems in 1RPIR, and little was done to speed

up the discharge process.[74] Poor administration added to PNGDF's woes, with soldiers discharged without their entitlements. Pay grievances were not resolved until 1996. But it was the ex-servicemen who would dog the PNGDF for years to come, unsettling the Force when the mood took them and swelling the ranks of mutinous soldiers when soldiers demonstrated over grievances.

The absence of efficient discharge procedures for service personnel remains one of the biggest headaches for the PNGDF leadership. Disgruntled ex-servicemen fuel discontent in the ranks while they remain in barracks awaiting discharge, safe in the knowledge that they rarely face disciplinary procedures. That has occurred because PNGDF officers are often uncertain how long funds for repatriation may take. (Prior to the 1980s, discharged personnel were returned to their province within hours of discharge.) Even when soldiers are removed from the barracks, many remain in the urban areas nearby, pocketing the money for return travel to their province and maintaining links with friends in the Force. So ex-servicemen remain, becoming a supportive voice outside army ranks.

Defence Expenditure

Lack of finance has been an underlying cause of problems affecting the efficiency of the PNGDF. While senior officers and unit commanders have pointed to the need for larger budget allocations in order to improve the PNGDF, the financial problem is more complex. The budget was only modestly increased during 1980-1990, in large part to fund pay increases. The Defence Department created many of the problems by its inability and unwillingness to work within budget provisions. Co-ordination of forecasts, prioritising of requirements, and disciplined supervision of budget allocations were consistently lacking. Unit operational and logistic forecasts were routinely inaccurate, ignoring the true running and replacement costs of vehicles, weaponry and rationing. Even the forecast costing of rations, quarters and training personnel was botched. Inefficient administration and poor management of recruiting targets resulted in the PNGDF exceeding the ceiling strength set by government and used by it to

---

[74] Author's experience as a military adviser in 1 RPIR 1985-88.

allocate funding. That ensured that the Defence Department began each year with insufficient funds.

Defence officials responsible for budgetary matters exercised little real power within the PNGDF. Historically weak in the eyes of the PNGDF, the role of the department had been secondary to operational issues. Senior managers did not adhere to quarterly allocations designed to instil financial accountability in units. Commanders simply ignored them. Units used a system of ILPOCs (Integrated Local Purchase Orders) which allowed purchases on credit — not always from the cheapest source. The army knew that money would run out towards the end of the financial year and by holding back, other units of the PNGDF would have the advantage. Faced with commitments to law and order operations, the PNGDF argued that the cost was a government and police responsibility. Overspending (Figure 5.3) grew with law and order commitments.

Figure 5.3

Defence Expenditure v/. Budget Allocation (1980-1990)(K Millions)

(Defence Reports 1980-90)

	Expenditure	**Allocation**
1980	26.2	25.9
1981	25.0	23.4
1982	25.0	22.3
1983	32.1	27.4
1984	34.6	37.4
1985	34.6	31.2
1986	35.6	35.2
1987	38.4	34.2
1988	39.6	34.4
1989	48.0	41.2
1990	67.3	43.2

Major equipment purchases together with the maintenance costs of existing capital added to the problems. One short-term solution to inadequate

funding was to postpone barrack maintenance. However, in the long term, the cost of maintenance escalated, burdening the PNGDF with an unmanageable expense. In 1986/87 defence co-operation funds were used to address maintenance problems but important follow-on maintenance by the PNGDF did not occur. Little provision was made for the maintenance of equipment. In some cases, the costs were considerable, particularly for equipment purchased as part of the PNGDF's policy of diversification. Equipment not used by the ADF, such as the Israeli *Arava* and the Spanish *Casa* aircraft, could not be supported even by private contract in Australia. Without money available for major overhauls in other countries further afield, the equipment became unserviceable.

The PNGDF's financial problems are not, as the PNGDF has argued consistently, simply the result of inadequate funding. Rather, the financial hardship is the result of a distortion of defence priorities, which has seen increasingly larger slices of the defence budget taken up by personnel costs, by 2000 between 70-80 per cent of the budget. Budgetary management aimed at containing costs has led to a repeated failure to make provision for the cost of replacement materiel, including defence infrastructure. Dibb and Nicholas (1996: 3) argue that a more appropriate balance in funding should be personnel 50 per cent, operating costs 30 per cent and equipment and facilities 20 per cent.

The PNGDF has failed to demonstrate that by getting the balance in perspective, the Force could be in a position to develop defence capability. There exists a dire need to get the basics right. Soldiers must be clothed, fed, equipped and accommodated in addition to receiving appropriate training. That would deliver a higher standard of morale, commitment, and faith in their leadership than is evident in the Force.

A cycle of equipment replacement is also absent from planning. The need to programme replacement items according to the Force strength before equipment reaches its expiry date has yet to be developed. Such planning is also the principal preliminary step to costing the defence budget submissions each year. Over the past decade, the PNGDF leadership concluded that defence capacity can only be improved by securing additional soldiers and equipment.

One of the keys areas contributing to the PNGDF's ongoing demise is the burden of unallotted personnel. Dibb and Nicholas (1996: 59) identified some 1300 surplus staff who made up Force strength but were not holding establishment positions. The PNGDF stands to reduce personnel costs markedly by discharging these personnel, although the redundancy costs were estimated to be K15 million in 1996 (ibid.: 112). That option does not sit comfortably with the army. The difficulties with the ex-servicemen in 1987/89 (See Chapter 6) have convinced the PNGDF leadership — and now successive governments — that the issue is too sensitive. That will ensure the army will remain cursed by high personnel costs characteristic of the PNGDF since the 1980s.

Much of the blame for the PNGDF's financial problems can be attributed to the Force, though the government's role in not giving adequate recognition to the cost of law and order cannot be ignored. The PNGDF's financial position was not unique. Other government departments had similar problems. That served to encourage the PNGDF. The army knew that the government would be reluctant to call it to account because of the government's growing dependence on the army to uphold civil authority. By the time soldiers were sent to Bougainville, the PNGDF cared little for budgetary limitations — the army had a convenient excuse for its financial mismanagement. However, excuses were little comfort to troops.

A Soldier's Life

The army's financial and administrative problems invariably took their toll on the soldiers. Replacement uniforms could not be obtained as uniforms wore out. Unit weapons were unreliable — even patrols deploying for border operations had difficulty finding suitable weapons (See Chapter 4). Radios were not replaced or serviced and units had few vehicles. Most vehicles were used beyond their serviceable life and operated only by cannibalising others. The RPIR Toyota landcruisers were, by 1986, six years old. So troops were knowingly put at risk whenever these vehicles were used.

The main area of concern for soldiers was the rationing system within the barracks. Meals were poorly prepared, nutritionally unbalanced and often short of rationing entitlements. For example, frozen meat, provided in bulk, could not be

sliced at Taurama Barracks. Once issued to Taurama catering staff, the unfrozen meat was returned to Murray Barracks for slicing before meals could be prepared. Vegetables were often rotten when unloaded and shortfalls were not made up, as no provision was made in the purchasing system for wastage. Often soldiers received only rice for their meals. Commissioned officers, assigned as duty officers, abrogated their responsibility to visit messes daily to ensure the adequacy of the meals being served. Soldiers therefore had little recourse for complaints.

Equipment and rationing problems were fundamental management problems. Many could be resolved with initiative and commitment. Had these problems been addressed, morale within the Force would have improved. Yet PNGDF officers did little, in part because they lacked confidence in their ability to resolve the issues. Many simply relied on army discipline to keep soldiers in check; even that was fast becoming a fragile commodity by the mid-1980s.

Married soldiers fared better with food but they too suffered problems. Married quarters often needed maintenance, in some cases for safety and hygiene reasons. Many considered the soldiers fortunate to have unit housing: in 1986, for example, some 480 married soldiers in the Port Moresby area lived with wantoks, the vast majority in settlements. With the soldiers regularly away, their families were exposed to dangers. Their situation often caused welfare problems, which the PNGDF was unable to resolve. Soldiers deployed to isolated areas for extended periods could not easily be extracted to their home bases. When soldiers — both married and single — tried to use free travel and leave entitlements to return home, they frequently found that funding was not available. All these factors combined to make soldiers an unhappy lot, susceptible to unrest when the mood took them.

Conclusion

The changes in appearance and equipment during the 1980s reflected fundamental changes in the Force. Ten years from independence, the PNGDF was in almost every respect an independent army responsible for its own decisions, albeit still dependent on Australian defence aid. Even there, however, the PNGDF was becoming an equal partner in the decision-making. That

reflected in part the changes in foreign policy towards Australia and the latter's role in the security of PNG. There is little doubt that the PNG Defence Department felt more comfortable with the situation and senior officers, in particular, were satisfied with their new-found authority.

However, the independent army was held together by an increasingly fragile leadership and entrenched officers were offered little incentive for performance. In some cases, they flouted their authority with few benefits for the rank and file. That led to instances of ill-discipline within units. The public had little knowledge of the problems. However, over the years, the murmurings within the ranks grew. The grievances would eventually manifest themselves on Bougainville and in the 1989 pay riots (See Chapter 6). All this occurred as the PNGDF found a more prominent role in PNG society.

The PNGDF was being drawn away from an external focus as the government grappled with the law and order problem (See Chapter 6). Internal security commitments, including assistance in disaster relief, would also result in the decline of the longstanding PNGDF presence on the PNG/Indonesian border, in spite of friction with Indonesian forces stationed there (See Chapter 4). The PNGDF lacked commitment to border operations, in part because of the extended deployment and lack of support for operations away from their home base. As the focus turned to internal security, the PNGDF had less contact with Australia.

Changes in the PNG/Australian relationship were inevitable given the time which had elapsed since independence. Australia favoured localisation, a process which changed PNGDF attitudes to Australia. PNGDF attitudes towards the Defence Co-operation Programme had been influenced by debate on the role of DC and the cost to DC of ADF personnel stationed in PNG. Australia also stood back from internal security involvement at a time when the PNGDF needed support, especially in logistics. Australia's stance was influenced by the politicisation of the PNGDF, especially since 1985. The diversification theme, which gained momentum in the mid-1980s was influenced by politics. The result was the formation of new alliances with countries with their own concerns about

Australia's role in the region. The PNGDF was frustrated by the challenges facing the force yet felt it could no longer rely on Australian support.

The commitment to internal security increased in spite of troop reductions. The ceiling (3050) prompted many in the Force to question the government's support. Burgeoning costs for the maintenance of equipment, including high-cost items obtained through diversification, left little financial capacity for additional demands. That impacted on the provision of rations and quarters for the troops, already disgruntled over conditions of service. The circumstances would ultimately strain relations within and outside the Force. Against that background, law and order operations would pose new challenges for the PNGDF.

****

Chapter 6

Law and Order Operations

'the value of the PNGDF lies partly in its existence as a national force with a reputation for efficiency and loyalty to the government ...' (Mench 1975: 120).

Introduction

Within a decade of independence, the PNGDF was on the streets of the capital, Port Moresby, and in other major urban areas — at the government's request. Between 1984 and 1990, the PNGDF played a major role in each of six law and order operations in PNG (Appendices 1 and 2). The Somare government first authorised the use of soldiers to bolster police patrols around Port Moresby in late 1984, in spite of political concerns at independence about using the army in any internal security role. Some politicians, especially John Momis (leader of the Melanesian Alliance Party and one of the founding fathers of the PNG Constitution), expressed concern about the appearance of soldiers on the streets, questioning whether the government's action was constitutional. Momis's concerns did not attract much support, in part because the number of defence personnel involved was relatively small — about 34 men. Later, the number of soldiers increased as the law and order clampdown escalated. By then, public concern over crime ensured widespread support for the use of troops. In time, the government accustomed Papua New Guineans to the use of the army in the fight against crime. Few seemed concerned about the risks in using the PNGDF.

A Constitutional Role

The CPC[75] *has very serious reservations about the army being used against its own people in any but the most extreme cases of civil disorder, and then subject to specific conditions* (CPC Report, 1974: 13/3)[76]

The Constitutional Planning Committee, influenced by the lessons of post-independent African states and their history of military takeovers, reluctantly provided for an internal security role for the PNGDF in the Constitution. However, the Committee took great care to build in safeguards and to emphasise

---

[75] Constitutional Planning Committee.
[76] See also Goldring 1978: 248-260.

that the use of the army in internal security was likely to be remote (personal communication Mr W. Lussick, OBE[77] of April 1996). Disturbances that might warrant PNGDF intervention would be 'of such intensity [and] so widespread that the police are unable to cope and the authority of the government is seriously challenged' (CPC Report, 1974: 13/5).[78] The CPC envisaged that, even in these extreme circumstances, the PNGDF would become involved in a graduated response, providing logistics, cordons, and roadblocks (CPC Report 1974: 13/5). The emergency provisions would be subject to parliamentary scrutiny (Goldring 1978: 252).

The role of the army after independence was the subject of widespread discussion prior to 1975 (See Chapter 2). Many, including members of the CPC, were acutely aware of the potential problems, given the Gazelle unrest in 1970 and tensions on Bougainville in 1975. Then, public attention had been drawn to the possibility that internal unrest could stretch police resources, justifying the use of the army. The Gazelle issue helped focus political attention on the role of the army in internal security. May (1993: 6) records a `general feeling that the administration had acted prematurely' in calling-out the army. Another academic, O'Neill (1971: 15) agreed, believing that the use of soldiers would have damaged the `image of the army in the community'.

Others, concerned about the prospect of a military coup, favoured a paramilitary role. Before independence, some had argued for an amalgamation of the police and the army. The then minister for territories, Morrison, favoured that approach. Other regional countries, for example Vanuatu, adopted the paramilitary option. However, this option reflected a limited capacity to finance a standing army, and the absence of any regional threat to these island countries. PNG understood that the army was a valuable `status symbol' (Turner 1990: 118). Yet there were other factors unique to PNG, which justified retention of the PNGDF. The country was the largest in the South-West Pacific, sharing a border with Indonesia. Colonial concerns over Indonesia influenced PNG's views (See

---

[77] Mr Lussick, a member of the CPC, toured Africa extensively as part of the planning process.
[78] For more detail on Emergency Powers in the Constitution, see Goldring 1978: 248-260.

Chapter 4). PNG also knew that the army would receive ongoing support from Australia. The question therefore was not whether PNG should have an army but what would be its role. In that, Michael Somare would play an important part.

Somare, Chief Minister in 1972, believed in separating the roles of the army and the police and in restricting the army's use to exceptional circumstances, such as national emergencies. Somare had made a genuine effort in the early seventies to gain a better understanding of the army and its role. The army too had encouraged such contact in order to bring the PNGDF and PNG's political leaders closer to allay concern over the army. At the same time, soldiers were being educated in their responsibilities to serve the people and to support the government of the day. Somare believed that the army had a key role in post-independent PNG.

Other PNG political leaders, mindful of the risks posed by unrest in the Gazelle in 1970 and on Bougainville in 1974/75, agreed that use of the army in an internal security role was a possibility. Senior army officers were also urging a role[79] (May 1993: 8). The views of academics and others also contributed to the debate. In acknowledging the army's role, however, the various groups were not convinced by arguments that `integration of the army into the political system [would] better prepare for an [internal security] role' (Sundhaussen 1973: 30). That may have worked in Indonesia but few felt comfortable with the army involved in government. The result could be a challenge to the civil authority. Political leaders felt that an appropriate balance rested with a clear definition of the military's role, and stringent conditions under which troops could be called upon to assist in internal security.

The CPC and PNG politicians were not the only groups concerned over the army's role in internal security. Prior to independence, academics were also voicing concern. Sundhaussen (1973: 31) noted that `an army involved in internal security is already involved and de facto in politics'. Hastings (1969: 30) shared the view, believing that `once an army assumes that role [in internal security], it

---

[79] After several years of internal security operations, PNGDF officers later opposed the army's use in small-scale police operations (Lieutenant Colonel J. Koaba Post-Courier 30 March 1989: 1).

inevitably becomes involved in the politics of maintaining law and order'. The Indonesian army with its prominent role in internal security, stood out as a regional example.

Mench (1975: 118), however, foreshadowed that the PNGDF provided the government `with a valuable reserve of force', a point not lost on PNG's politicians. Indeed, Mench (ibid.: 117) believed that `military aid to the police may prove less exceptional in PNG than had been the case in Australia'. This took account of Australian attitudes at the time of PNG's independence. Australian soldiers had not been used in internal security (except during the Second World War). Australians therefore felt uncomfortable with internal security powers conferred on the PNGDF.

Mench (1975: 58) also claimed that the Gazelle unrest prompted hastily arranged training in internal security following the call-out. That could be interpreted to suggest that until the Gazelle problems, the PIR did not conduct training in internal security. However, the PIR had been training in internal security for years. In 1968, for example, troops deployed to the border following elections in Irian Jaya received training in crowd control (discussion Lieutenant Colonel Ormston[80] (Retired), 21 November 1997). In 1970, soldiers conducted similar training in preparation for the Gazelle.

The constant theme in these cautionary messages was the need to keep the army focussed on external defence. In that, the army had an unchallenged role. The police carried responsibility for law and order. Warnings from academics reinforced mistrust of the army in an internal role. Mediansky (1970: 41) warned that calling out the troops would `result in ... civilian supremacy itself [becoming] dependent on the army'. This echoed the view of Janowitz (1964) that `civil supremacy depended on sharp organisational separation between internal [the police] and external [the army] violence forms'. Yet these views left unanswered the problem of dealing with internal unrest which outpaces police capabilities.

While the use of the army in internal security was seen as only a remote possibility, in spite of the Gazelle incident, support for such a contingency still

---

[80] Lieutenant Colonel Ormston was in 1968 a platoon commander in 1 PIR.

existed in PNG political circles. In 1971, 'in the wake of increasing lawlessness in the Highlands, highland politicians called for the use of the PIR' (May 1993: 39). The same support was evident in 1977 (ibid.: 40). In the event, the PIR was not used until 1984.

By 1975, the Constitution had put in place a number of checks and balances, including:

- a division of control between command of the army and political control with a separation of powers between the commander and the defence minister;
- the creation of a secretary of defence;
- limitations on the powers of call-out requiring approval by the Governor-General acting on the advice of the National Executive Council; and
- subordination of troops to the civil authority in the event of call-out.

Before examining the PNGDF's involvement in law and order in detail, it is important to understand the Constitutional and legal provisions governing the use of the Force, especially in relation to the primacy of civil authority. Since 1975, the PNGDF had stood out from involvement in internal issues. The deployment of the *Kumul* contingent to Vanuatu in 1980 helped reinforce the PNGDF's external-oriented defence outlook. The other influence was the view, not without some justification, that the PNGDF would only be called upon as a last resort, where the internal situation had deteriorated to a point where only through the assistance of soldiers, armed and under their own command, could civil authority be restored. Indeed, using the British Army experience in internal security in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and Hong Kong, on whose training the PNGDF modelled its own, the internal situation must be critical before military intervention is considered. Even then, intervention is limited, sufficient for the restoration of police authority.

Under the PNG Constitution, the PNGDF may be called upon to assist the civil authority in:

- a civil disaster; or
- the restoration of public order and security on being called out in accordance with Section 204 (call-out in aid to the civil power); or

- accordance with an Act of Parliament, during a period of declared emergency under Part X.

In the latter case, the emergency provisions of the Constitution are governed by several principles set down by the CPC prior to independence (Goldring 1978: 249/250):

- introduction and continuation of emergency powers are subject to parliamentary control;
- emergency powers must:
  - — recognise human rights;
  - — be limited in extent;
  - — should not, except in extraordinary circumstances, include detention without trial;
  - — be justified by the Government;
  - — include safeguards against abuse of power; and
  - — be subject to scrutiny (by an Emergency Committee).

The nature of defence support, including command and control arrangements, weapons and special powers, is established through consultation between the army and the police. In some cases, the police may recommend to government certain special requirements, for example, whether the soldiers will be given special powers of arrest.[81] In most situations involving the army in internal security duties, once order has been restored the police assume responsibility and the soldiers are withdrawn. Another option is to use soldiers to protect installations, allowing police to concentrate on restoring order. In all cases, the key profile is of the police, not the army, whose role should be limited.

The reasons underlying this approach lie with the need to maintain the subordination of the Army, which recognises the different approaches by the police and the Army, and the principles of minimum force. For these aspects to

---

[81] While the delegation of arrest powers is consistent with the principle that the army should have no greater powers than those given to the police, it is difficult to see the rationale for such action. Soldiers should, at all times, be working with the police with whom the power of arrest properly lies.

be managed in any response to a breakdown in civil authority, the government sets down clear responsibilities for the Army, including a well-defined chain of command and good communications channels. In their absence, there is a risk of excessive use of force and of soldiers being used in a way which is inconsistent with the Constitution. These issues seem not to have been established before soldiers deployed. Perhaps such matters were considered well outside the situation — only 34 soldiers assisted the police in those early days. Still, even this small operation provided lessons for future law and order operations.

Prior to PNG's independence, the PIR trained for a role in aid to the civil power. Tight security surrounded the army's training, even within the PNGDF — only PIR units trained for internal security operations. Recruits, for example, were not even shown crowd control procedures until just prior to graduation. Training in riot control did not become part of recruit training until 1973, as the PNGDF prepared for independence. Care was also taken in moving troops to internal security training outside the barracks. Gas masks and protective equipment were concealed during movement. Most training was conducted away from public view to avoid political fallout and to maintain a degree of secrecy about military tactics. By independence, Constitutional provisions for the use of the army in internal security ensured continued training for such an eventuality.

The PNGDF's internal security training followed procedures which were designed to control the population and to restore authority. Soldiers operating in this role followed two main principles: the maintenance of public confidence and adherence to the legal provisions, especially in the use of minimum force. These provisions set down, as a fundamental principle, the primacy of the civil power. Troops on call-out were subordinate to the civil authority — the Police Commissioner and his delegate (a subordinate police officer) in the area of operations. The other guiding legal principles set down that:

- soldiers had the same — no more no less — rights and duties as civilians with regard to self-defence and arrest, including in the use of force; and
- notwithstanding that soldiers acted in response to the orders of a superior officer, the soldier was ultimately responsible in a court of law for his actions.

While the PNGDF acted under the overall command of a police officer, the army sought to avoid joint operations where the police commanded troops directly. The army reasoned, with some justification, that soldiers were more effective under their own officers. In any event, Army/police procedures varied; the terms used by each disciplined force were different and each force employed different drills. Sound command procedures, especially under difficult and hazardous situations were fundamental to achieving the restoration of civil authority. That approach did not rule out a police presence in army units in the interests of accountability and to take advantage of police powers of arrest.

Senior army officers and the police accepted these arrangements. Training in internal security centered on regular liaison and familiarity by members of both forces with each other's tactics. These reduced problems on the ground in the event that soldiers were called out. Given their routine deployment in crises, the police were experienced while, until 1984, soldiers had been limited to theory.

Aid to the Civil Power

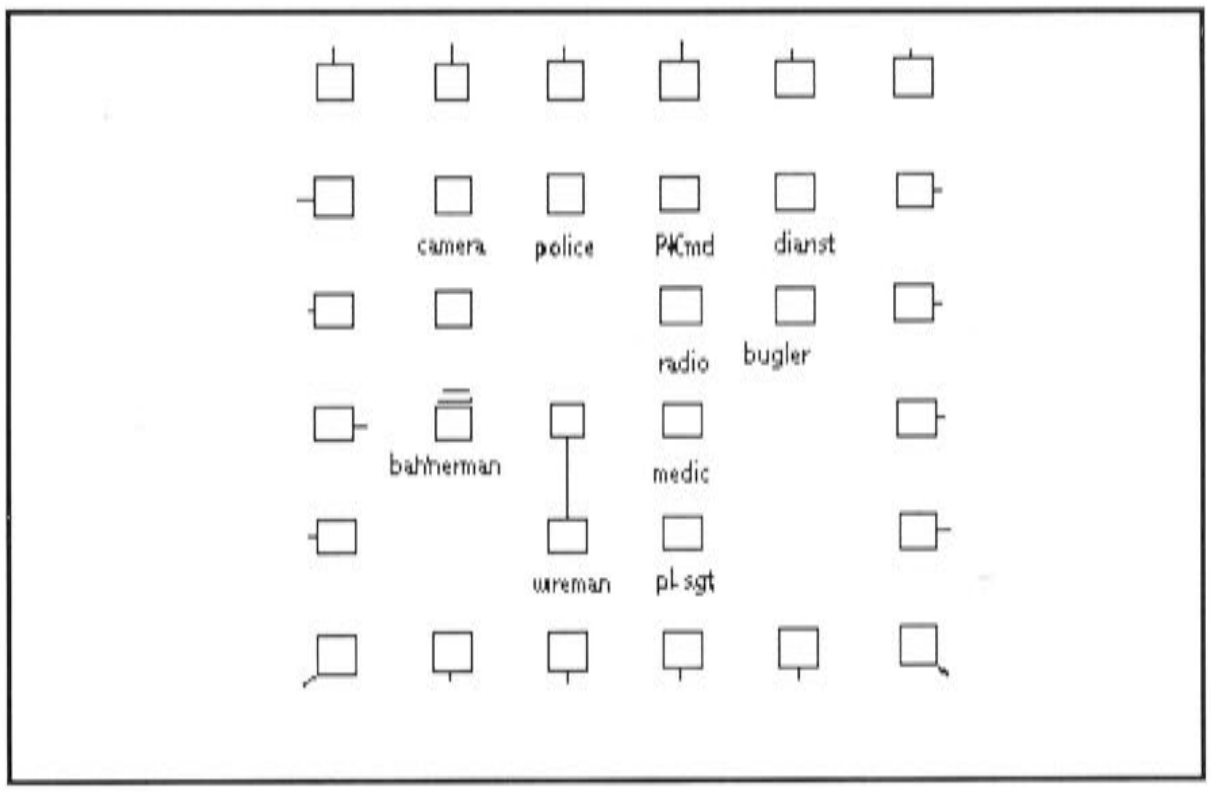
Broadly, the PNGDF role in assisting the civil authority was intended to re-establish control. Patrols, roadblocks and observation points were measures employed during a state of emergency or curfews as the situation dictated. Procedures used by the security forces could also be complex where the threat was considered high. The emphasis in PNGDF internal security training was to present a disciplined and professional face to the public. However, it was important to recognise that the army's presence arose because the police were no longer capable of enforcing civil authority. In those situations, the PNGDF represented the last bastion of defence against anarchy. By necessity, troops were deployed to achieve quick results within the limitations of minimum force.

In understanding the army's role, it is useful to compare some of the procedures. The basic army formation used in internal security was the platoon (34 men). The platoon was the smallest conventional army unit commanded by a commissioned officer, usually a lieutenant. The unit had a radio integral to its formation and therefore possessed a capacity for control by higher headquarters. A platoon had good firepower, which ensured a capacity to operate away from the

main unit for limited periods of time. Importantly, the platoon could be broken into three smaller elements (sections) should the need arise. For all these reasons the platoon, capable of manoeuvre even within the confines of urban areas, became a useful formation in internal security. One principal use of the platoon was in restoring police control during riots and large-scale demonstrations. The structure was commonly referred to as the *box formation* (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1

The Box Formation[82]



The box formation has the hallmarks of the hollow square[83] — providing protection against attacks from any direction (all round defence). The platoon commander could adjust the platoon's focus if confronted by new threats, ensuring flexibility in manoeuvre. The platoon presents a disciplined, well-armed and cohesive military formation to the public. Similarly, the procedures followed by the platoon in dealing with riotous crowds are set-piece and rehearsed in keeping with the laws governing the use of troops. Clear and unambiguous warnings to disperse are given to the crowd before adopting the use of force. In the event that troops are required to fire, specific targets, usually ringleaders, are

---

[82] The Bannerman was responsible for displaying a warning banner prior to action being taken by the soldiers while the Wiremen set up the wire obstacles to protect the unit from the crowd.
[83] The hollow square was first used in European warfare by infantry in the Eighteenth Century to defend themselves against cavalry charges.

identified before the order is given. Automatic or indiscriminate volleys fired into crowds are avoided. In such tense situations, the highest standards of training, discipline and leadership are essential. Indeed, the deployment of small units, commanded by young and inexperienced officers, demanded high standards.

The crowd dispersal tactics based on the box formation offer the most common army presence in aid to the civil power aside from cordon operations. The platoon box formation is a discrete army unit. Since the PNGDF became involved in law and order operations in 1984, crowd dispersal procedures have never been used. That begs the question of why the PNGDF was needed. The success of army intervention relied on police co-operation, far from assured given their dubious history.

Police/Army Relations

The early history of the PNGDF, including during the Second World War, is marked by clashes between soldiers and the police. Rivalry and physical confrontation has instilled in the members of both forces a degree of antipathy toward each other. Attitudes had changed little when soldiers joined the police on the streets of Port Moresby in 1984. Still, some argued that by assisting the police, the two forces would be drawn dangerously close together. For those who argued this way, running battles between police and soldiers in 1987 must have been reassuring.

Figure 6.2

Police/Army Clash - January 1987

On 1 January, a policeman reprimanded a soldier for allegedly sexually assaulting the policeman's girlfriend. Soldiers later assaulted the policeman near Gordon's Barracks, Port Moresby. When police responded, the soldiers sought the assistance of troops from Murray Barracks. Police cars were damaged and a police officer assaulted. Further confrontations occurred on 3 and 5 January.

On 6 January, Prime Minister Wingti called the Police Commissioner and the PNGDF Commander to account, directing them to restore order in the police and army ranks. The Commander threatened soldiers involved in the melee with the sack. Within days the tensions eased (Post-Courier 5 January 1987: 2).

Mench (1975: 204) had warned that an` attempt ... to balance ... the police [against the defence force] ... may lead to the setting up of dangerous rivalries'. The government, as a matter of priority, did ensure that the defence force strength remained below that of the RPNGC. Yet no account seems to have been taken of the advantages enjoyed by the army over the police. The army had superior firepower and a concentration of manpower in key parts of the country, especially in the capital, Port Moresby. These made the army the most powerful of the three disciplined services.

Mench seems not to have taken account of the rivalry between the two forces, which already existed. The PNGDF view was consistently that the army was in every respect superior to the police. That view was reinforced by the army's assistance during law and order operations conducted from 1984. Others shared Mench's view. Colonel Glanville, now retired, said in 1985 that the army's involvement in internal security would `destroy ... fragile national unity' (quoted in Standish 1994: 63). Both Glanville and Huai (then Chief of Operations) rejected in 1981 any military intervention in internal security. Their position was at odds with Diro, who in 1975 supported an army role in internal security — a view shared by senior PNGDF officers at the time.

Standish (1994: 63) claimed that the PNGDF was not `designed for internal security roles'. The basis for that view is not clear. In fact, the formations designed for external defence were easily deployed for internal security operations — subject to regular training in such operations. That structure had been used by the British army in the Middle East and in the Far East since the Second World War.

Neither the army nor the civil authorities were well prepared for military assistance in internal security. The Gazelle call-out in 1970 had shown poor liaison between the various agencies, detracting from the fundamental need to promote a `constitutional tradition of civil supremacy over the military' (Mench 1975: 59). The situation had not improved by the mid-1980s when law and order operations were mounted. Inter-agency co-operation was still described as `*ad hoc*' (Morauta 1984: 14). Attitudes within the police and the army did little to

foster a co-operative effort. The police envied the standards of accommodation and rationing maintained in the army bases. The soldiers were better equipped, in spite of an overall deterioration in army standards since independence.

The army conducted much of its internal security training without police involvement. The situation did not improve until 1986 when police mobile squads began to conduct joint training. Senior army officers saw little of their police counterparts. The benefits of joint training in communications and deployment eluded the security forces. That made more difficult a joint approach in combating crime. Frustrations and conflict which were never fully resolved added to tensions between the forces.

Before examining the early operations in detail, it is important to understand the sequence of events and the influences behind the government's decision to call out the PNGDF. Indeed, these events would be repeated within a few months, in 1985, when soldiers would be deployed to assist in larger numbers. In examining events, special attention must be given to the nature of the threat to internal security — the so-called *raskols* and tribal fighting.

Raskols - A Growing Concern

> *'Many ... believe that the deteriorating law and order situation is leading the country down the road to anarchy. Others say it is already there'* (Turner 1990: 162).

The term *raskols* was `first used in the 1960s to describe Port Moresby's youth gangs but it gained currency after the gangs ... adopted the name in the 1970s as a badge of notoriety' (Dorney 1990: 301). Within two decades, the *raskol* gang had become `the most potent and disturbing symbol in contemporary law and order folklore in PNG' (Dinnen 1996: 93). *Raskols* know that the threat of police intervention while committing a crime is low, the risk of detection after the event small, and even if arrested and convicted — neither are certain — there is little likelihood of serving a full sentence. Those are the facts. Debates which emphasise the unreliability of statistics, and the prevalence of violent crime in other countries, including Australia, do not diminish the criminal threat in PNG. Attempts to dress up crime as an act of survival or the *raskols* as latter-day Robin

Hoods insult the victims of crime and those who live with the threat — black and white. Put simply, PNG has a serious and worsening crime problem.

Figure 6.3

Raskols

(Pacific Islands Monthly 1993: 1)

A number of studies has been conducted into the *raskol* phenomenon in PNG.[84] The efforts of other individuals have not been duplicated in this thesis, which draws upon their findings and, my own first-hand experiences.

One of the central issues of crime in PNG is the glaring paradox — criminal activity is rampant among people who hold sacred across all tribal cultures the principle of payback. In this system, any act against an individual risks payback by the victim's tribal group — not necessarily against the member who committed the offence. The payback system is at least theoretically a great leveller, especially among highland people. Yet little payback for criminal attacks occurs beyond tribal fights. For example, Papuan *raskols* carry out criminal activity with apparent impunity, even against fellow Papuans. In discussions with Papua New Guineans, the paradox has been explained in different ways. Some argue that *raskols* are protected by tribal groups in return for their protection from other criminals and for a share in the spoils. The magnitude of the *raskol* problem was starkly revealed in December 1984. At least eleven gangs with a membership of 3000 operated in Port Moresby (Appendix 3).

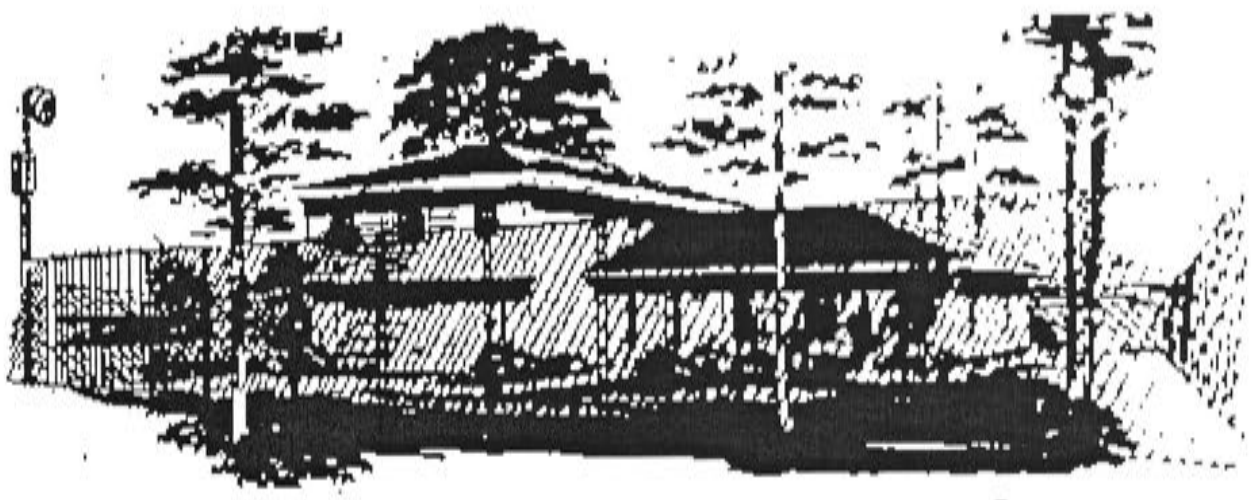
Capital Fright

In Port Moresby, in response, the public looked for measures to thwart the *raskols*. `Port Moresby became a city under siege' (Dorney 1990: 305) as those who could upgraded security around their homes (Figure 6.4). Fences, electronic gates, sensors and metal grills on windows and doors became commonplace in the capital. Security became `big business' (Post-Courier 31 May 1985: 2); the installation of domestic security devices and fences cost upwards of K16,000 at 1985 prices (ibid.). These measures were supplemented by security guards. Under PNG law, the guards could not be armed. As the *raskols* often had at least one firearm, the guards offered little opposition. The guards worked night shifts without rest so that many simply slept on the job, failing to provide even early warning of a *raskol* attack. On occasion, guards assisted the *raskols* with information. Unscrupulous security firms also staged break-ins to secure a lucrative guard contract or to improve business.

Figure 6.4

Security Measures - Port Moresby

(Post-Courier 31 May 1985: 2).



THE costs of security gear, as installed, on your average high-covenant Port Moresby house.
• Security fence: K2000;
• Gates with automatic (electronic) controls: K2000;
• Garage with roller door with electronic closing/opening control: K3000;
• Security screens (bars or grills) on windows and doors of house:

A safe house

K4500;
• House alarm system with sensors on doors and windows: K2000 (includes "panic buttons in rooms");
• Electronic infra red beams system inside the house: K2500.
Total bill for all measures K16,000

Dogs became a popular security measure in the capital. The animals were relatively cheap, were loyal, and it was well known that *raskols* and Papua New

---

[84] See, for example, Harris (1988).

Guineans generally had a fear of dogs. Still, the *raskols* devised ways of dealing with the dogs either by distracting or killing them. Most people used the dogs for early warning rather than any serious attempt to deter criminals.

The police also used dogs effectively as an anti-crime measure. Police dogs were trained at Bomana, a police training facility on the outskirts of Port Moresby. The pups were fostered out to the public for their first twelve months before training as police dogs. The German shepherd pups were not mature enough to be trained before twelve months though from 1988 the police began training the dogs at six months in order to meet the RPNGC demand. The police provided food weekly and all veterinary care. As care of the dogs was important, only members of the public who could guarantee the dogs' security received the animals. Sir Michael Somare was among those who fostered dogs.

In time, radio networks supplemented the physical security measures around and in houses. Radios provided a quick and usually reliable link to assistance in the event of trouble. *Raskols* were in the habit of cutting telephone lines before entering premises. Radios were especially useful when away from home — some models even indicated position when activated. Sprays, screamers and, ultimately, guns were used to enhance security though the latter required licenses. These improved security but did not always shift the balance in the individual's favour when faced with a criminal gang armed with pistols or rifles.

The cost of add-on security was often high though, in time, new buildings incorporated the security features in their design. The high cost of maintenance of electronic devices, which were particularly susceptible to tropical weather, influenced policy decisions on housing for staff. Some companies decided to build compounds to enhance security and reduce the numbers of guards. (*Air Niugini* built the first compound in Port Moresby in 1969.) Another form of compound living included the use of high-rise buildings. Even so, these were targetted by criminals. The buildings posed other problems. In Port Moresby, the buildings often lacked water pressure and occupants were vulnerable in the event of fire — the fire brigade lacked equipment for buildings higher than two stories. In time, others would choose to fly in/fly out, leaving their dependents in

Australia. Under this scheme, costs were reduced dramatically, not only for security but also for medical and education expenses.

A Wider Problem

The *raskol* problem was not unique to Port Moresby. Since 1966, robbery and looting had been reported along the Highlands Highway together with increasing crime in urban areas of the Highlands (Clunies-Ross et al. 1973: 30). Nor were *raskols* the only threat to law and order. Tribal fighting had challenged policing in the country even before independence. However, according to Mapusia, a research officer in the RPNGC, the frequency and ferocity of tribal fighting had increased since 1973 (1986: 66; See also Standish 1994: 64). In response, the government introduced an *Inter-Group Fighting Act* in 1977 (Mapusia 1986: 57) and used the mobile squads to restore order.

Tribal fighting was prompted by traditional issues, especially land disputes, bride price, payback and theft. In time, political issues would also lead to fighting. Tribal fighting has been the subject of much research. Clifford (1984: 92) saw tribal fighting as a response to disorder, a view shared by Mapusia (1986: 65) who believed that the fighting was neither civil unrest nor a threat to the security of the state. Others saw the police, and later the security forces, as part of the problem. Dinnen, at an academic presentation in Canberra (5 November 1996) on *PNG: The State of Violence or the Violence of the State*, highlighted the retributive character of police actions, especially when operating under emergency measures. Police operations were often punitive, according to Dinnen — a theme reflected in the names of operations, such as *Mekim Save* (to make [people] understand). Dinnen claimed that operations proved counter-productive, often alienating the police.

In spite of these aspects, governments strengthened the measures, employing elements of the PNGDF in 1987 in the highlands. In time, tribal fighting and *raskol* activities across the country threatened economic activity, especially around mining sites. Preventative measures added to the cost of production through the increasing use by mining companies of fly in/fly out arrangements for staff and air transportation of goods and mineral products.

The mining industry provided key benefits for the Papua New Guinea economy. However, employment programmes have fallen short of meeting the needs of the workforce. During the 1980s, 4000 new jobs each year were insufficient for the 40,000 strong labour force (Brunton 1986: 35). Many youths expect that education will ensure employment and access to goods. When that fails to materialise, these individuals have 'a feeling of purposelessness and alienation [both] closely associated with their subsequent anti-social behaviour' (National Planning Office 1981: 355). Successive governments failed to respond to the unemployment problem, according to Brunton (1986: 35-40) due to:

- a lack of political cohesion and the absence of a common view on national destiny;
- an imbalance between the allocation of government resources to youth and young people's expectations;
- low levels of political consciousness; and
- an expensive and inefficient public sector.

Certainly these issues explain why law and order problems forced the government to adopt contingency measures as a quick fix solution. Bi-partisan support for emergency measures was more easily obtained than political support for a long-term economic policy which may have reduced unemployment. By the time the government took action against crime, *raskols* had adopted a pattern of activity which depended for its survival on fear and community support.

The 49 Steps

'the law and order problem ... is a complex ailment ... caused by a combination of economic, social and political factors' (Turner 1990: 163 quoting from the Clifford Report 1984).

In October 1984, the NEC, meeting in Madang, approved 49 measures aimed at combating crime.[85] The decision was prompted by sustained public pressure over previous months for the government to address rising crime. One of the key decisions was to involve the PNGDF in law and order operations; this was

---

[85] NEC Decision 176/84 `Measures to Combat the Breakdown in Law and Order' (Turner 1990: 165).

one of a number of confidence-building measures designed to increase the manpower available in the fight against crime. Indeed, the police had often argued that for want of more police crime was getting out of control. The government decided that using PNGDF manpower would be a cheaper short-term alternative than the recruitment of additional police. The government also reasoned that the PNGDF was already a disciplined force with powers under the Constitution to assist the civil authority. In any event, the deployment of soldiers was only a temporary solution. After the police had regained control, the soldiers would no longer be needed. However, the government did not understand the tactics used by the PNGDF in internal security. That lack of understanding had been apparent before independence, including by Michael Somare, then chief minister. The government's decision would have long-term consequences. Indeed, Turner (1990: 177) noted that:

> if strong-arm para-military tactics and attitudes continue[d] to hold sway ... [it] would mark the beginning of an irreversible march to the destruction of the founding principles of Papua New Guinea.

Operation *Santa Claus 84*

When the PNGDF was called upon to assist the police in 1984 — as supplementary manpower not as formed units — Headquarters PNGDF did little to counsel the government on the implications. Rather, PNGDF staff were more concerned over the question of whether weapons would be authorised for its soldiers. Others, outside the Defence Force, including some within the RPNGC, were worried about the risk of clashes between soldiers and the police, especially given their past history of conflict. In the event, the main cause of concern in the police ranks was their insistence that they be issued long trousers like the soldiers. In shorts, then standard issue for general duties officers, the police felt inferior to their army counterparts (personal communication Superintendent D. Ramathugula, RPNGC of 8 August 1996). Mobile squad trousers were issued.

On 21 December 1984, a platoon of soldiers deployed from Taurama Barracks to assist the police in Port Moresby. During the operation — codenamed *Santa Claus 84* — soldiers were allocated on the basis of two per

patrol, accompanying a lone policeman (Figure 6.5). After much debate between the commander and the police commissioner, over whether the patrols should be armed, each patrol was issued with one smoke gun. The smoke or gas gun was a 1.5 inch calibre, single barrel, shot gun used to fire tear gas canisters into crowds up to a range of 200 metres. The weapon was carried for its deterrent effect with little application in thwarting armed criminals. The soldiers were not permitted to carry weapons. Soldiers were also used to supplement police at roadblocks. Overall, the defence presence was small — 34 men compared to 650 police.

Figure 6.5

Combined PNGDF/Police Patrol - 1984

(Post-Courier 24 January 1985: 3)

The decision to deploy the PNGDF was opposed by then Colonel Huai (Chief of Operations). Huai argued that the PNGDF had become no more than cheap manpower. Others opposed the government's decision to use the army, especially Father Momis who described it as a `constitutional violation' (Post-Courier 28 January 1985: 3). However, public concern over law and order muted outcries over the government's use of the troops. Police Commissioner Tasion's claim seven days into the operation, that serious crime had dropped allayed public concern over the use of soldiers in internal security.

The operation in Port Moresby, which concluded on 8 January, provided only temporary relief. On 10 January, a young Papua New Guinean woman was

pack-raped, suffering severe head injuries in the attack. That prompted a women's rally which re-ignited pressure on the government on the issue of law and order. Only a week after the incident, *raskols* raped two expatriate women and a nine year old girl. One suspect was arrested but escaped on the way to court. Public anger intensified and, mindful of the 1984 women's demonstration,[86] the government again authorised the call-out of the PNGDF. On 21 January, a company of soldiers was allocated to police operations in Port Moresby for three months.

Operation *Hot Spot*

The operation — codenamed *Hot Spot* — was modelled on the combined activities of Operation *Santa Claus 84*. The soldiers (100-120) provided extra manpower for police patrols, which facilitated operations over a more sustained period. On the streets of Port Moresby, an army presence was becoming routine.

Ten years after independence, 1985 would not be a good year for the PNG government. Law and order problems would worsen, compounded by other nagging national issues. The PNGDF had its own problems after beginning the year in the public spotlight in combined operations with the police. In February, allegations by Enga MP, Paul Taurato, that military weapons were being used in tribal fighting in the highlands appeared in the press. Indeed, two soldiers armed with self-loading rifles (SLRs),[87] allegedly took part in tribal fighting in Enga (Post-Courier 21 February 1985). Brigadier-General Noga responded to the allegations by ordering an investigation and a stringent check of weapon holdings in all military bases. By March, Noga reported that two soldiers on leave had been involved in tribal fighting but he assured the public that no army weapons had been used.

The accuracy of those weapon checks was questionable. In August 1986, for example, Lance Corporal Dogeri Leva was fined K35 for removing an SLR rifle from Taurama Barracks on 14 September 1984 — a weapon used in the rape

---

[86] In 1984, a rally which followed the rape of a New Zealand woman and her daughter, expected to number 5000, drew 25000 in protest (Turner 1990: 167).
[87] The 7.62 mm self-loading rifle was standard issue for riflemen in the PIR.

of an Australian woman on Tuesday 1 April 1986 (The Times 13-19 August 1986: 3). That weapon had been missing from the 1 PIR armoury before the PNGDF carried out the weapon checks ordered by Brigadier-General Noga in February/ March 1985. Yet its loss was not discovered and reported.

The security of military weapons began to fall away in the 1980s.[88] Military regulations require all weapons to be accounted for on each occasion they are issued. In addition, the unit was required to conduct full weapon checks each pay Thursday. Weapons were to be stored in armouries with the bolts/firing mechanisms removed and stored separately in a safe. Keys to armouries were secured in the Guard House of each unit at the end of each day. Yet, weapon checks were not always carried out in accordance with procedures; armoury keys were taken home and the weapons left unattended in quartermaster stores. In those circumstances, weapons could easily be removed for extended periods or simply sold. In some cases, soldiers rented weapons to *raskols* for a weekend or used the weapons themselves in criminal activities.

In March 1985, more problems emerged for the PNGDF. The police and the National Intelligence Organisation investigated the Force, following rumours of potential unrest arising from poor morale. The principal cause of the unrest was attributed to the resignation of Colonel Huai (Chief of Operations) on 31 January. Huai had been a vocal critic of the government, attacking its use of the PNGDF on law and order operations, the lack of funds for defence, and the government's decision to purchase the Israeli *Arava* aircraft against defence advice. Huai had resigned in protest, promising to assist soldiers as a civilian (Post-Courier 28 February 1985).

On 4 March, Huai, now a civilian, again attacked the government, this time over politicising the PNGDF. In part, he was again referring to the government's decision to purchase the *Arava* aircraft. That purchase had come in for close scrutiny with allegations that PEL AIR Aviation had received K400,000

---

[88] By 1996, the PNGDF could not account for eighty-five weapons.

commission on the sale[89] (The Times 2 June 1985: 1). Huai said that 'the next commander had to be beyond reproach' (Post-Courier 4 March 1985: 2). Huai's actions enjoyed popular support from the rank and file of the PNGDF. Still, some recognised that the publicity also had benefits for Huai's well-known ambition to contest the 1987 elections as a member of the People's Progress Party. Whatever Huai's motivation, the publicity did little to help Brigadier-General Noga whose leadership came under scrutiny. The government sought to shore up the commander, publicly announcing continued support for him. Even so, rumours of unrest undermined government confidence in the PNGDF's loyalty. Some in government were mindful of Father Momis's warnings in January when he criticised the use of soldiers in internal security; a process which `destroyed [PNG's] democratic image ... [with] military coups not long in coming' (Post-Courier 28 January 1985: 3).

Operation *Green Beret 85*

> *`[crime] ... is shaping the internal economy of PNG and shaking the confidence of the population in the ability of the system to deliver peace and order'* (Dorney 1990: 288).

Public concern over law and order had been building since January 1985. The early operations conducted in Port Moresby failed to remove the *raskol* threat. Indeed, people were no longer confident in the government's ability to establish order let alone improve the situation. The police too were concerned, examining all possible options. Consideration was given to a request for Australian defence personnel to assist in logistics, communications and training. No official request was forthcoming although, at the time, an Australian communications specialist was advising the RPNGC as part of an ongoing commitment. The Australian presence in the RPNGC had been declining since independence, as it had been in the PNGDF. Concern in Australia over the deteriorating law and order situation in PNG would lead to the establishment of a law and order aid programme under the auspices of Australia's AusAID agency.

---

[89] PEL AIR had featured in a controversial incident in which Prime Minister Somare had intervened to prevent a search of a PEL AIR aircraft by customs officials (Dorney 1990: 234-235).

In April 1985, the Chairman of the Law and Order Task Force, speaking at a gang retreat — an initiative designed to rehabilitate *raskols* — encouraged gang members to join the PNGDF. The comment was made during a demonstration rifle shoot for *raskols* by soldiers at the Goldie River Training Depot. The *raskols* were impressed by the firepower of military weapons, some seeing their potential use in criminal activity. Some *raskols* did join the PNGDF, eluding the mandatory criminal check by using false names. However, soldiers with criminal backgrounds undermined discipline. Some used their positions to support criminal activity. The *raskol* presence in the PNGDF and their adverse effect is addressed in Chapter 7.

Initiatives such as gang retreats did little to curb crime. On 7 June, a New Zealand woman and her daughter were pack raped, rekindling memories of a similar attack in October 1984. A week later, the same gang carried out several holdups around Port Moresby, eluding police attempts to capture them. Crime worsened when, on 11 June, twenty-two prisoners escaped from Bomana gaol.

Government patience ran out on 12 June. The NEC approved, initially for a period of twenty-one days, a state of emergency with effect from 13 June. A curfew was introduced in the National Capital District from 2100 hours to 0400 hours effective from 17 June (Figure 6.6). Parliament endorsed the NEC decision for a state of emergency and extended the period for two months until 4 September. Under the provisions of the Constitution, a state of emergency may be introduced for a period of twenty-one days provided the NEC decision is endorsed by Parliament within fifteen days (Section 239 (1)). Parliament can extend the initial period to two months, and for subsequent periods of two months (Section 239 (1) and (3)). Notwithstanding support for the State of Emergency, the Opposition had earlier criticised the Somare government over its decision. Opposition leader Wingti suggested that the government was 'playing with the peoples' short-term emotions' (Post-Courier 24 April 1985).

Figure 6.6

Curfew - June 1985

(Post-Courier 17 June 1985: 14)

INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

EMERGENCY (NATIONAL CAPITAL DISTRICT) (GENERAL POWERS) ACTS 1985

I, David TASION, Controller, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by the Emergency (National Capital District) (General Powers) Act 1985 hereby make the following orders in the empowered within the National Capital district

001 there will be a general curfew between the hours of 10.30pm and 4am daily.
002 There shall be no demonstration or protest marches
003 All Licensed Premises shall cease the sale of liquor at 9.00pm and no person other than registered hotel guests shall consume liquor on such premises after 9.15pm.
004 All premises kept for the purposes of entertainment including Discos shall close at 9pm and all persons must leave such premises by that time.
005 No Taxi shall be driven after 10pm.
006 No Rural based PMV shall operate within the boundaries of NCD after 8pm.
007 All shops including "Caravan Shops" and "Tucker Boxes" will close by 8pm
008 No Government Vehicle other than those allocated to Departmental Heads or Members of Parliament shall be driven after 6pm unless authorised by the Controller
009 There will be no Street trading at any time
010 No Vessel, whether Coastal or Ocean-Going will be permitted to dock during the hours of curfew.
011 No Take Away Sales of Alcoholic beverages will be allowed after 5pm Monday to Thursday and NO such sales will be allowed at any time from Friday to Sunday.
012 NO exemption Permit or Curfew Pass shall be transferable at any time under any circumstances.

These Orders shall come into force commencing Monday the 17th day of June, 1985 and shall be in force daily for a period not exceeding twenty one days from Friday June 14th, 1985.

Dated this 14th day of June, 1985.

D TASION OBM
Controller

The state of emergency involved 1500 police — 400 extra police were brought to Port Moresby from outlying provinces — and 140 (1 RPIR) soldiers (Post-Courier 14 June 1985: 1). The operation included a plan to saturate Port Moresby with 105 patrols (involving 300 police), backed up by the Criminal Investigation Division and Force 10,[90] jointly responsible for investigating serious crime such as rape, robbery and murder. Police Headquarters at Konedobu would coordinate operations through seven police stations in the capital.[91] Surveillance operations at settlements, especially routes in and out of those areas, were set up. The police also offered K1000 reward for information on criminals. Overall, the resources represented an impressive array of security force muscle designed to build public confidence and to capture criminals. However, for the operations to be successful, major obstacles had to be overcome.

---

[90] A Serious Crime Squad, Force 10 was known as the 21 Squad before the state of emergency.
[91] Police stations included Port Moresby, Boroko, Hohola, Gerehu, Gordon, Tokarara and Badili.

Port Moresby, an area of thirteen square kilometres, had a population of 350,000. Police estimated that there were 370 gaol escapees in the city, in addition to about 3000 *raskols*. The police faced a daunting problem of identification even if the criminals could be apprehended. To achieve success, the police relied on information, which was not always forthcoming, in spite of the rewards, because people feared the *raskols* and police. Of the police available, provision had to be made for three shifts daily and rest for those involved.

Even so, some success was achieved in the state of emergency. Among those arrested were three police; one was subsequently charged with the rape of the expatriate woman and her daughter as well as with several robberies. However, many of those arrested were charged with curfew infringements which were largely incidental to the operations. Those arrested included Wiwa Kerowi (Post-Courier 19 July 1985: 2) — later Governor-General of PNG. Still, the arrest figures gave the illusion of success, bolstering public confidence.

Soldiers played their part in the operations, conducting, in addition to foot patrols, several cordon and search operations in support of the police. These operations were consistent with the PNGDF's role in internal security. On 25 June, the two mile settlement was cordoned and searched. On 19 July, another cordon operation was mounted against Morata settlement (Post-Courier 19 July: 1). The operation lasted two hours. `Thousands of kina worth of equipment was recovered and over 100 suspects arrested' (ibid.).

The police saw the settlements as legitimate targets. A motley collection of ramshackle buildings on the fringe of Port Moresby, the settlements housed large numbers of people, many of whom were unemployed. The people were squatters living on land for which they paid nothing, a fact which created antipathy between them and the traditional Papuan landowners of the area. These areas were often, though not exclusively, the refuge of *raskols*. Income and, at times, daily needs, were provided in part by criminal activity. The co-existence of squatters and *raskols* provided a useful cover for criminal activities. The police had little sympathy for people in the settlements. Strong-arm tactics were commonly used during raids on these areas. Property confiscated during these

raids included items legitimately owned. However, in the absence of receipts, people could not verify their claims of ownership. The police approach alienated many people who, if treated differently, could have assisted the police in law and order operations and in general policing.

On 2 July, soldiers were given additional tasks. They were used to guard Bomana Gaol (Post-Courier 2 July 1985: 2) — scene of many breakouts in recent years. The troops were there to bolster the Corrective Institutions Service (CIS) and prevent further breakouts. Security at Bomana, located next to the Police Training College on the outskirts of Port Moresby, had concerned the public for some time. In 1985, the gaol housed 460 prisoners. Bomana was one of several gaols located throughout PNG. All shared common problems. Indeed, in 1985 the then minister for corrective services, Mr Marsipal, described the gaols as `chicken sheds' (Post-Courier 12 June 1985: 2). Prisoners could escape simply by leaping over fences — or by walking through them.

The state of PNG gaols and the prison service generally was shameful. The CIS shared problems of poor morale and a lack of resources with the RPNGC and the PNGDF. The CIS was criticised, noting that:

> overcrowded conditions have been common; juveniles have been put in with hardened criminals; prison breakouts ... [are] frequent; there appear to be high rates of recidivism; ... [there are] abundant reports of brutality by prison warders; accusations that warders have inadequate skills and [are] physically unfit, and the CIS's concept of rehabilitation seems extremely vague (Turner 1990: 176-177).

Prisoners knew that the best time to escape was on government payday when `warders were distracted or turned up to work drunk' (Post-Courier 5 June 1985: 2). The beleaguered CIS had poor prisoner checking procedures, inadequate search practices, and lamentable professional conduct in the performance of their duties. Too few criminals were successfully prosecuted in the courts, largely because of poor arrest and evidentiary procedures. Prisoners would often opt for a mass break-out which effectively overwhelmed the warders. Large numbers of criminals on the streets ensured crime levels would escalate,

taxing police resources. Against that background, it is difficult to understand government claims in September that crime was coming under control. Confident of its judgement, the government eased the curfew on 3 September to 2400 hours to 0400 hours. Even so, Parliament remained cautious, extending the state of emergency at its meeting in October to 4 November.

The state of emergency ended in December 1985. In spite of its intensity and the numbers of security force personnel involved — in all, one quarter of the total security force personnel in the RPNGC/PNGDF — the restoration of civil control was shortlived. Outwardly, the public and the government considered the operation a success, justifying the enormous financial cost and the lapse in policing elsewhere in the country. However, in time the government would have to repair the damage by conducting operations beyond Port Moresby. For the moment, people enjoyed temporary relief from the criminals, now lying low or threatening other communities. The government still had not appreciated that so long as the resource problems of the RPNGC were not addressed, emergency measures achieved only temporary gains. The government also failed to recognise that serious problems could quickly erupt in PNG, straining security force resources. One such case was the Okuk riots in 1986.

The Okuk Riots

The internal stability of PNG had been under threat since independence, in spite of the law and order operations aimed at restoring authority. The fragility of that authority could be quickly exposed. Periods of anarchy highlight the weaknesses of the security forces and their ability to respond. Often these incidents occurred in rural areas, especially in the highlands, beyond the gaze of the wider population. However, when these incidents occurred in urban areas, such as in Lae or Port Moresby, the events could not be ignored. The 1986 Okuk riots in Port Moresby (and other centres) graphically illustrate the problem.

Iambakey Okuk was a firebrand politician. A passionate orator, he enjoyed wide respect in spite of his often erratic approach to government. As deputy to Sir Julius Chan in 1980, he proved unmanageable to the detriment of government solidarity. On the death of Okuk from liver cancer on 14 November

1986, Prime Minister Wingti, facing a vote of no confidence and conscious of the upcoming national election in 1987, saw political advantage and regional benefits in a state funeral. He decided to take Okuk's body to Mt Hagen, Goroka and Kundiawa after the body lay in state in Parliament in Port Moresby, to allow people to pay their respects. That decision would have dire consequences.

On Monday 17 November,[92] with Okuk's body lying in state at Parliament, crowds in Port Moresby got out of control. Highlanders exacted a toll on anyone not seen as paying respect. *Raskols* and others looted stores amid the confusion. Rioters attacked and damaged government infrastructure and vehicles. Fifteen police were injured and police vehicles burnt. So widespread was the rioting, the police were caught off guard. People sheltered at home or with friends to escape the violence. Schools closed as did business houses. Airlines ceased operations as staff and passengers found movement in the city impossible. The daily Qantas flight was diverted to Cairns. Anarchy persisted in Port Moresby for three days until order was restored on Wednesday 19 November. Why did the police take so long to regain control?

The police had no warning of the unrest. Indeed, the trouble seems to have been largely impromptu, sparked by police hardline tactics in the early stages. However, the police did not respond quickly to the escalating violence, which allowed the trouble to spread to other parts of the capital. Yet the scale of rioting and its widespread nature only partly explains the problem. The police reacted to the problem by concentrating on the area around Parliament. That left little capacity for problems elsewhere. Even when police became aware of the unrest wider afield, police reinforcements, especially riot squad members from MacGregor Barracks outside Port Moresby, could not be transported. In the end, police commandeered vehicles or used other government vehicles. In time, a helicopter assisted with co-ordination. The problems in Port Moresby were not appreciated at the time. If it had been necessary to call-out the PNGDF to assist, limited numbers were available.

---

[92] The account of events is compiled from first hand experience by the author in Port Moresby over the period 17-19 November 1986.

The First Battalion, which had provided soldiers for *Santa Claus 84, Hot Spot* and *Green Beret 85*, was on exercise three hours from the capital. Transport was not available to return the soldiers quickly to assist the police who were hard-pressed, concentrating their efforts in key areas. In the event, the task was made easier when, by day three, the fire went out of the rioters and they began to disperse. Police resources were further stretched as Okuk's body was transported around the country with the unrest spreading to Lae and to the highlands. Even as memories of the unrest faded, crime in Lae and in the highlands demanded emergency government action.

Operation *Green Beret 87 (Koolex)*[93]

Until 1986, law and order operations had been conducted in Port Moresby. However, crime problems existed elsewhere. Government claims of success in the capital encouraged other areas, including Lae, to press for similar operations in their areas. Criminal activity was rampant in Lae even as Port Moresby came under curfew in 1985. However, the scale of that activity did not attract concern until 1986 when police came under pressure to curtail criminal activity there. The law and order problems in Lae were exacerbated by an influx of people from Morobe and highlands provinces. The Highlands Highway enabled low-cost access to people in search of employment. Squatter settlements were established and Morobeans were displaced. In late 1986, a policeman in pursuit of a *raskol* shot another youth — an incident which saw `public confidence in the police take a sudden nosedive to hostility' (Post-Courier 1 September 1986: 1). The next day, riots in Lae resulted in damage to twenty cars, creating problems for the police. The policeman was later charged with murder.

On 4 March 1987, Timothy Bonga, MP raised in the national parliament, as a matter of public importance, the `ever-increasing criminal activities in Lae' (Post-Courier 4 March 1987: 1). Bonga had experienced first hand the criminal problem with the death of his brother at *raskol* hands in December 1986. Notwithstanding Bonga's pleas, Prime Minister Wingti resisted emergency

---

[93] The PNGDF codename for this operation was Koolex.

measures, noting he would 'not react to a crisis situation in an unprepared, ad-hoc manner' (ibid.). Wingti also refused an Australian aid offer of K500,000.

Wingti felt that the long-term solution to the law and order problems was increased employment. He refused to `be side-tracked by crisis', and he was critical of `solutions [which] were short term and, however drastic, were doomed to failure' (Turner 1990: 175). In January 1987, however, Wingti made an about-face. He indicated a willingness to accept a curfew if local leaders demanded one. He was conscious that national elections, later in 1987, could be under threat unless crime was brought under control. Wingti was also aware that criminals had torched the Lae police station on the night before he visited the city. On 15 July, the NEC approved a curfew in Lae and the call-out of the PNGDF. Deployment began the same day and the operation — *Green Beret 87* — lasted until 31 July 1987.

Operation *Green Beret 87* involved 200 police and soldiers. In addition, 100 special constables were appointed in Lae to assist. For the first time, soldiers too were given the powers of special constables. Those powers gave soldiers the right to arrest suspects in the same manner as the police. The high profile presence of police and army personnel in Lae had the effect of restoring public confidence. Within weeks, the public began to enjoy freedom and security, which had been eroded by criminals in the years leading up to the curfew. Few seemed concerned at the restrictions on their movement imposed by the curfew. Still, the degree of personal security was fragile. As the curfew was drawing to a close, the horrific murder of Heather Mitchell, an Australian pilot with Pacific helicopters, on 4 July during the police clampdown, brought home the limitations of curfews in preventing crime. Even so, further operations were mounted.

Operation *LOMET 88*

In spite of the limited success of earlier emergency measures, the law and order operations in Port Moresby (1985) and Lae (1987) were seen as an appropriate response to criminal activity. Port Moresby and Lae were considered under control but criminals were still operating with relative impunity in the highlands. National and provincial pressure led to demands for similar operations

in the highlands. Eventually, the government capitulated and a state of emergency — codenamed *LOMET*[94] *88* — was declared in the five highland provinces with effect 12 September 1988 and lasting until 12 December 1988.

The law and order problems in the highlands were further complicated by tribal fighting, which was rife in 1988, especially in Enga, Southern Highlands (Nebilyer Valley) and in the Western Highlands. Once the result of 'marriage problems, pigs and land disputes, [modern day issues such as] political opportunities, ... the material returns of political office, elections, the development of *bisnis* [business] and motor vehicle accidents have added new reasons to fight' (Turner 1990: 170). The government's *Inter-Group Fighting Act* in 1977 had failed to combat the problem, in part because the Act did not allow for the prosecution of groups; only individuals could be charged with offences (Mapusia 1986: 65). The police were hard pressed to control the spread of clan-based fighting in the highlands which, even when contained, threatened to break out again at any time. The increasing use of firearms by tribesmen made police efforts more dangerous in the difficult terrain. Those problems prompted the deployment of troops for *LOMET* operations.

Armed soldiers deployed to the highlands in support of the police. Many of the operations mounted during *LOMET* involved soldiers in support of the police mobile squads.[95] These squads used brute force in putting down tribal fights, justified on the basis that such measures were the key to suppressing tribal unrest. Mobile police routinely burnt villages, looted, raped and killed in the name of justice. While the army played largely a support role, soldiers quickly learnt from the mobile squad tactics.

The practices drew criticism at the time. Standish (1994: 65) noted that `state violence against the public and large-scale destruction of property received ... public and parliamentary condemnation'. Standish (ibid.: 80) also claimed that

---

[94] Law and Order, Murderers, Escapees and Tribal Fighting.
[95] Mobile squads were formed on a part-time basis in 1962, in response to riots on Buka Island. The first full time squad was set up at Bomana Police College in 1966 (Mapusia 1986: 65).

the security forces' actions provided the highlands people `with a common cause which could seriously damage national unity'. The claims of security force excesses were justified. Soldiers returning from operations confirmed that their involvement with the police invariably resulted in co-operative efforts, including abuse of power. Soldiers believed, however, that the seriousness of the situation and public demand for a hard line, justified their actions. The slur on the PNGDF's reputation was disappointing. The police had been feared and hated even before independence — the PIR was not (Nelson 1972: 204).

During *LOMET*, soldiers were tested on few occasions. Only one incident in which a soldier fired on tribesmen attacking a police/army patrol was reported. Overall, *LOMET* merely suppressed tribal fighting and had a similar short-term effect on *raskol* activity. Still, the operation, like those in Port Moresby and Lae, was acclaimed a success. No more operations on the same scale would be conducted in the highlands — Bougainville gave the government no choice, with the PNGDF and police hard pressed to maintain a presence on the island. However, the PNGDF was to be involved in a smaller — yet significant in its precedent — operation at Ok Tedi.

Operation *Iron Foot*

In September 1988, a PNGDF platoon based at the Kiunga outstation was placed on alert, following industrial unrest at the Ok Tedi mine. Workers were threatening to close down the mine. The government was prepared to assist when police based at Kiunga expressed concerns over possible damage to the mine site. The PNGDF operation — codenamed *Iron Foot* — was to prevent access to the minesite. The deployment occurred during 22 to 25 September (Defence Report 1988). Roadblocks were set up. However, the dispute was resolved. Even so, the use of the PNGDF to protect the minesite was the forerunner to Bougainville operations. Operation *Iron Foot* barely tested the PNGDF. Still, law and order operations had exposed problems in the army, especially logistic aspects.

Logistic Implications

The deployment of platoon or company groups on law and order operations presented few logistic problems for the PNGDF. In 1985, soldiers

operated close to their main barracks with its rations, transport and facilities for rest. Similarly, in Lae, troops could be supported from Igam Barracks on the outskirts of the city. However, Operation *LOMET* in the highlands posed new challenges. In order to get around its problems in supporting soldiers deployed there, Headquarters PNGDF looked for assistance to the police and their special funding provisions under the emergency. The PNGDF elements were rationed and quartered in various police barracks in the area. As a result, the PNGDF did little contingency planning for operations where soldiers, especially in larger groups, would be required to operate away from army bases.

Wider Implications

The army's principal concern, albeit muted, was with the adverse effect assistance to the police was having on training schedules. In the end, training programmes were largely abandoned.[96] In their absence, little was being done to prepare the PNGDF for its increasing role in internal security. The absence of regular training also affected broader military skills, discipline and unit cohesion which began a rapid decline. The Bougainville deployment exposed that decline, from which the PNGDF would be hard pressed to recover. The evidence of it was also starkly shown in instances of army unrest, for example, Operation *Albatross* in 1988 and the 1989 pay riots (See below).

The poor state of the PNGDF can therefore be traced to the period 1985-88; internal security commitments changed the face of the PNGDF, largely because the army derived little from its deployment in support of the police. Soldiers quickly became bored with the grind of internal security duties which demanded night shifts over three to six months. The deployments were often bereft of the planning and preparation characteristic of army operations. Briefings on the crime situation were *ad hoc* and fell short of the detail required for contingency responses. Soldiers were often confused about the rules of engagement and the extent of their power under the SOE, and over the chain of command. Even rudimentary planning such as rostering, the location of assembly points, relief arrangements, and pre-patrol inspections were absent. Duties were

---

[96] Author's experience as a Military Adviser 1985-88.

principally related to curfew enforcement with few incidents to break the monotony, reinforcing the argument that the army was used prematurely on law and order operations between 1984 and 1987.

Unit commanders viewed the PNGDF's role in aid to the civil power as minor in comparison to the PNGDF's wider responsibilities for the country's defence. The relative ease with which the soldiers handled their role on the streets gave a false sense of security. Indeed, a handful of soldiers seemed to achieve far more than the police had managed before the emergency. Officers could point to the success achieved in deploying increasing numbers of soldiers wider afield between 1985 and 1988. However, the pivotal role of special funding and of government aid in those operations was not recognised. The officers failed to respond to the steady decline in military skills and standards of discipline brought about by the internal security operations. The officer corps was therefore culpable at every level for the dismal performance of the army on Bougainville. Even more damning was the fact that once the lack of professionalism had been exposed publicly, these officers lacked the credibility and loyalty within the Force, by then highly factionalised, to address confidently the weaknesses — especially the indiscipline. The erosion of Force capabilities continued in 1989-1990, accelerated by rebel successes.

The use of the PNGDF in law and order operations underscored the seriousness of PNG's law and order problems. Even under emergency restrictions, criminals still had scope for criminal activity. Curfews, for example, did not prevent crime in daylight hours. Nor could the emergency measures prevent a resurgence of crime once the operations ended. Among the many studies carried out into PNG's law and order problems — the Clifford Report and the Harris study are but two — analysis has shown that the emergency measures failed to curb crime. No effective long-term strategies to reduce crime — which might have justified the cost of law and order operations, and the army deployment — were put into effect. Indeed, the army deployment served to undermine defence capabilities, which would lead ultimately to the PNGDF's ignominious withdrawal from Bougainville in 1990.

Police success during the emergencies can be attributed to the co-ordinated use of resources, including army manpower, the provision of additional funds, and government pressure for results. With the loss of those resources after the emergency, and the absence of any collective will on the part of the police to maintain a high profile presence as a deterrent to criminals, effectiveness waned. Co-ordination of intelligence and manpower simply failed to materialise. Police argued that without resources there was little incentive to combat the criminals. For their part, successive governments have persistently failed to allocate resources sufficient for an expansion of the police and for the acquisition of resources to boost police morale and confidence. Those budget increases which were granted tended to be swallowed up by the higher costs of policing, particularly in salaries.

The net effect was a poor public image of the police who were criticised for their absence on the beat and for their inability to respond in a timely manner to reported crime. Indeed, my observations between 1970 and 1990 confirmed declining police confidence and standards. Two-man foot patrols gradually gave way to four-man car patrols with a reluctance to tackle criminals without back-up and preferably police dogs. Criminals learnt that they could commit a crime and make good their escape before the police responded. Against that background, the PNGDF view that their presence on the streets derived essentially from police inefficiency was understandable. PNGDF contempt for the police grew.

The PNGDF quickly recognised police limitations, especially against an armed PNGDF. While the numbers in the two disciplined forces were comparable, the PNGDF possessed greater firepower and its numbers were concentrated in Port Moresby and Lae. Those advantages gave the PNGDF a clear edge. On Bougainville, the PNGDF took control and neither the government nor the RPNGC was prepared to call the soldiers' bluff.

The government's solution to its crime problems was a demonstrated preference for one-off funding and the call-out of the army to enhance police capabilities. That knee-jerk response in using the PNGDF had wider implications. The army's use in internal security outside military parameters —

under army command, armed for crowd dispersal and in protection roles — ensured a breakdown of professional standards, erosion of the PNGDF's subordination to the civil authority and, with it, a loss of accountability and respect for the government.

Changes in army attitudes towards the government were already taking place among the lower ranks while their senior officers preoccupied themselves with issues such as border security. However, the PNGDF was being drawn into internal security. Later, on Bougainville, internal security duties would come to dominate all aspects of the PNGDF; the scale of that commitment would reduce its capacity to patrol PNG's borders or to deter potential aggressors. The vision of PNG's leaders at independence — indeed their insistence — that soldiers would be used in internal security as a last resort, had been replaced by a willingness to use them routinely, without adequate safeguards.

Relations between the PNGDF and successive governments had been under strain since 1982 when force numbers were reduced. Paradoxically, the government had called increasingly upon the army to shore up its authority while reducing the PNGDF's capacity to deliver. The government did not match its expectations of the PNGDF with the necessary commitment. Soldiers were also concerned that their pay and conditions were being eroded. Many felt slighted by politicians who were widely seen to be looking after their own interests. Soldiers had a deep sense that their value to PNG was not being recognised. An increasing incidence of ill-discipline reflected an erosion of professional standards. That indiscipline was evident in annual defence reports presented to the government. However, the government ignored the warning signs. As conditions in the barracks deteriorated (See Chapter 5), feelings of injustice would eventually manifest themselves in challenges to government authority, and then, in 1989, direct confrontation with the government.

Challenges to Government

Operation *Albatross*

The government decided in April 1986, as part of its decision to close Lae airport, to move the Air Transport Squadron (ATS) from Lae to Nadzab airport,

twenty kilometres inland. Nadzab was a new airport facility built by Australia for PNG's independence. Civil aviation operators had already moved from Lae. The decision to move ATS would cost K20 million, including new infrastructure. The ATS relocation was the first large-scale move of any PNGDF unit since the 1960s. Notwithstanding the government's plan, the PNGDF remained in Lae, claiming that money was not available for the provision of amenities on the same scale as at the old base. On 20 November 1987, Wing Commander O'Connor handed over command of ATS — the last PNGDF unit commanded by an Australian — to Lieutenant Colonel Lai[97] (East Sepik). During the fly-past for the occasion, a DC3 crashed, perhaps signalling difficult times ahead for the unit.

The minister for civil aviation announced in June 1988 that Lae airport was to be closed to air operations. The decision effectively ended PNGDF flights through Lae airport. On 5 June, Brigadier-General Lokinap ordered 1 RPIR to secure Lae airport and PNGDF assets there on 6 June (Defence Report 1988). The operation — codenamed *Albatross*[98] — was mounted to prevent the Department of Works tearing up the airstrip. A platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Paul Iatau, departed Port Moresby in a DC3 in the early hours of 6 June to carry out the operation. After securing the airport, the armed troops prevented officials from entering the airport. Lokinap argued that the operation was necessary to ensure that the PNGDF remained capable of air support for operational reasons (discussion Brigadier-General Lokinap 18 April 1996). Prime Minister Wingti later reprimanded the Commander but the PNGDF remained at Lae airport until 1991, when the ATS relocated to Port Moresby.

Pay Riots-1989

In August 1987, James Pokasui, a former PNGDF captain and then MP, was appointed minister for defence, replacing Stephen Tago. Pokasui understood the problems facing the PNGDF, noting concern over `poor morale and a sharp drop in discipline' (Post-Courier 17 August 1987: 2). He emphasised the need to

---

[97] Lieutenant Colonel Lai was one of the first four Papua New Guineans with Form 6 education recruited to become the first pilots in the PNGDF (see Chapter 2).
[98] Experience as a military adviser in 1 RPIR 1985-88.

improve conditions of service, especially pay and housing. Pokasui also advocated force expansion, noting the need for three engineer battalions, doubling the size of the PNGDF within fifteen years (Post-Courier 30 September 1987: 2).

Pokasui's proclamations were welcome news for a beleagued PNGDF, faced with demands for troop involvement in law and order operations and natural disaster assistance. However, the minister seemed to have little idea of how these changes would be achieved and he would `not say where the money would come from' (ibid.). Nonetheless, the defence minister pressed on with change. On 22 December, Pokasui appointed Brigadier-General Lokinap as Commander, removing Huai for `indiscipline and infighting' (Post-Courier 22 December 1987: 2). Pokasui went further, sacking three colonels on 15 January 1988.

In a bid to resolve the emerging pay issue, the PNG Department of Defence agreed to the conduct of a review by Hay Consultants funded by the Defence Co-operation Programme. The review analysed each position in the PNGDF and assessed the pay entitlements of each. The review was supported by the ADF, which saw value in an examination of both job descriptions and pay levels. The pay issue was to further damage the defence relationship as soldiers saw Australia in part to blame for the shortfall in pay expectations.

On 20 January 1989, the defence minister announced a pay rise — the first in twelve years for the soldiers — backdated to 11 January 1988. An interim amount of K17 per pay would be paid to all members of the Force. The pay rise would add K1.48 million to the PNGDF salary vote. Pokasui pointed to serious discrepancies in PNGDF pay rates, noting that army pay had fallen behind 70 per cent in relation to the wider PNG workforce. In the minister's rush to announce the pay rise, little consideration was given to the accuracy of detail or the need to brief soldiers on the proposed pay changes. In the absence of official information, soldiers assumed that pay would increase 70 per cent. Media reports heightened expectations. The actual pay rises by rank varied (Figure 6.7) with the most substantial given to one individual — the Force Chief Warrant Officer — of 58 per cent. Officers also received substantially more than the lower ranks. Cabinet

limited the pay rise to all ranks in the first year to 25 per cent and spread the remainder over three years.

Figure 6.7

PNGDF Pay Rates - 1988 –1989

(Kina per fortnight)

	1988	**1989**
Recruit	104.90	104.90
Private	123.89	145.95
Lance Corporal	145.95	164.35
Corporal	155.15	193.12
Sergeant	174.14	232.82
Warrant Officer	203.10	272.14
Chief Warrant Officer	212.49	317.40
CWO (Force)	228.41	392.77
Lieutenant	217.48	265.62
Captain	272.14	392.77
Major	338.11	475.04
Lieutenant Colonel	475.04	552.14
Colonel	552.14	631.73
Brigadier-General[99]	961.59	961.59

The pay rise was set down for payment on Thursday 8 February 1989. The day before, on 7 February, sailors from the Maritime Element billeted at Taurama Barracks received their pay early to allow for their putting to sea. Soldiers at the Barracks took the opportunity to compare the sailors' pay rise against the promises and expectations. They found the pay levels fell well short. Angry, soldiers headed for Murray Barracks where the Headquarters and Pay Office were located. The Barracks Duty Officer, Major Paul Dala contacted Colonel Nuia who was attending an Australian High Commission function, to

[99] The rate of pay received by the PNGDF Commander remained unchanged in the review.

inform him of the unrest. Nuia returned to Murray Barracks to find the Chief of Staff, Colonel Karry Frank attempting to contact the Commander who was at that time on Bougainville with the National Security Advisory Committee (NSAC). Nuia told Frank not to bother the Commander but rather to focus on defusing the problem. However, Frank refused to confront the troops (discussion Colonel Nuia of 18 December 1996).

Colonel Nuia, who knew many of the soldiers, told them they should present their grievances to their respective unit commanders in the morning (8 February). The troops agreed and returned to Taurama Barracks. That could have been the end of the unrest had unit commanders taken up the issue. However, poor communications and a lack of appreciation of the soldiers' mood, saw the soldiers march *en masse* to Murray Barracks on 8 February.

The soldiers headed for the Officer's Mess and the commander's residence. Again Nuia intervened, ordering the force sergeant major to assemble troops on the parade ground. On this occasion, Colonel Frank attempted to address the soldiers but was howled down. Colonel Nuia fared little better and he was assailed with cans. During the proceedings, an unidentified officer told the soldiers that their grievances were not the making of Headquarters — they should take their concerns to Parliament, then in session. That fateful remark prompted the troops to march on Parliament, gathering *raskols* in the process.[100]

At Parliament House, an apprehensive deputy prime minister, Akoka Doi, caved in to the soldier's demands, promising pay rises. That placated the soldiers but not before parts of the Parliament were damaged. At some point during the unrest, the Namaliu government contemplated the use of Australian troops to counter the riotous troops.[101] Doi's promises only made matters worse. The Defence Department brought forward the pay increases to pay soldiers. Meanwhile, the government announced an inquiry into the mutiny, standing down the commander and secretary. Colonel Bau-Maras was appointed acting

---

[100] Soldiers attempted to gain access to the armouries but were prevented by officers who anticipated their actions.

[101] According to Mr J. Wall, Political Adviser to Prime Minister Namaliu (1988).

commander and was still in command a month later, when troops deployed to Bougainville on Operation *Blue Print*. Within days, Bau-Maras would also be called upon to provide troops to counter unrest in Port Moresby.

Operation *Southern Breeze*

After the sobering experience of the PNGDF pay riots in February, the police were vigilant for unrest which could again get out of hand. In April 1989, a demonstration, largely by Papuans, was held in Port Moresby to advocate peace and an end to inter-communal conflict between Papuans and highlanders which had been evident in the capital for several weeks. However, the march 'degenerated into wild scenes' (Turner 1990: 172). Police killed a Papuan youth in the melee, prompting further unrest. Many youth armed themselves as business houses were looted. The PNGDF was called on to assist with a company of soldiers deployed at the height of the riots. The deployment — codenamed Operation *Southern Breeze* — was shortlived, with soldiers bolstering the police presence at roadblocks in the city. No incidents occurred during the deployment and the troops, after three days, returned to barracks.

Conclusion

Analysis of law and order operations since 1984 shows that in spite of the police clampdown, reinforced by the presence of the PNGDF, PNG remained afflicted by a high rate of crime. Dinnen (1996: 98) concluded his examination of the operations by describing the joint PNGDF/police measures as `spectacularly unsuccessful'. The ongoing use of the security forces to shore up internal security attests to the government's inability to best the criminals. The lack of success stems from the government's incapacity, in large part because of an absence of strong and co-ordinated commitment, to address the economic, social and political issues which underlie the law and order problem. Against that background, Wingti's belief that crime would only be defeated by growth leading to employment, is astute, though in the face of public pressure he too opted for hardline measures for their immediate effects.

PNG's crime problems demand a sustained and increased commitment of resources for the police, the CIS and the judicial system. The PNG government's

reluctance to adopt longer term strategies for its problems is influenced in part by its lack of confidence in its disciplined forces — even with additional resources. Lending weight to the government's caution is the rate of change in political office — votes of no confidence have created a culture driven by short-term goals. Even with the necessary resources, the security forces `would have difficulties in tackling the range of challenges facing criminal justice agencies in Papua New Guinea' (Dinnen 1996: 95). Meanwhile, the capacity of state controls will be further eroded, increasing the demand for emergency measures to arrest the spiral into lawlessness. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that the criminals are modifying their activity; during curfews, *raskols* adopted new tactics for daring daylight attacks when the police presence was low.

The emergency measures were a catalyst for change in PNG society. They were also to bring about changes in the PNGDF, its focus, and in its relations with government, the police and the public. Law and order operations, which began in 1984, marked a shift from an external focus to internal security. Indeed, for the remainder of the decade and beyond, the PNGDF would become committed to internal security operations. In the early 1970s, that scenario prompted some to foreshadow a potential military takeover. Certainly, the PNGDF had assumed a higher profile in internal affairs in the period 1984 to 1990. Soldiers had also challenged government authority during operation *Albatross (*1988*)* and during the pay riots in 1989. However, soldiers had not joined the police in the abortive coup led by Commissioner Tohian in 1990 (See Chapter 7). Troops had also deployed to Bougainville and sustained operations at the government's bidding in 1989. In spite of that, a more serious and sustained challenge, given the events of 1980-90, became more likely. That caused many in government to be wary of the PNGDF, a situation made more difficult by the government's increasing dependence on the force to uphold civil authority. PNGDF involvement in internal security had changed relations between the government and the soldiery.

Police/PNGDF relations also changed in this period. Clashes between members of the two services continued as they had throughout their history. The

joint operations in combating crime had changed little in that regard. Friction had also increased between senior PNGDF officers and the police hierarchy over command and control of soldiers deployed for joint operations. Even so, the lower ranks of both services were being drawn closer together in their shared effort to combat crime and restore order. That was particularly evident in operations involving the police mobile squads. The army learnt and adopted many of the harsh practices employed against the civilian population, borne from frustration in establishing order. Clashes continued, suggesting that longstanding animosity would remain, fuelled by PNGDF conviction that the army was superior to the police.

In spite of the PNGDF's preoccupation with internal security during the 1980s, the Force structure did not change substantially. The PNGDF certainly used their profile to argue for increases in strength and for a larger share of the national budget. However, organisational change was modest and limited to the formation of a Plans Branch and to the amalgamation of intelligence capabilities of the Force (See Chapter 5). These changes were driven more by Force initiatives to improve overall capabilities than by any real attempt to address shortfalls exposed by PNGDF involvement in internal security. For the most part, therefore, the PNGDF organisation remained largely unchanged from that set up at independence, retaining its capacity for external defence and, where necessary, internal security.

The role of the army under the emergency provisions warrants particular criticism. The employment of soldiers in a policing role undermined their value as a professional army. Bougainville aside, increasingly their value to the state in internal security has been confined to that of additional manpower. Over time, the PNGDF lost its capacity to conduct conventional internal security operations — a loss compounded by force indiscipline and poor leadership. In that process, the PNGDF's capabilities as a defence force have been damaged — possibly irrevocably. That poses particular problems for the PNG government, which has become, to some extent, dependent on the PNGDF to uphold its authority. In a

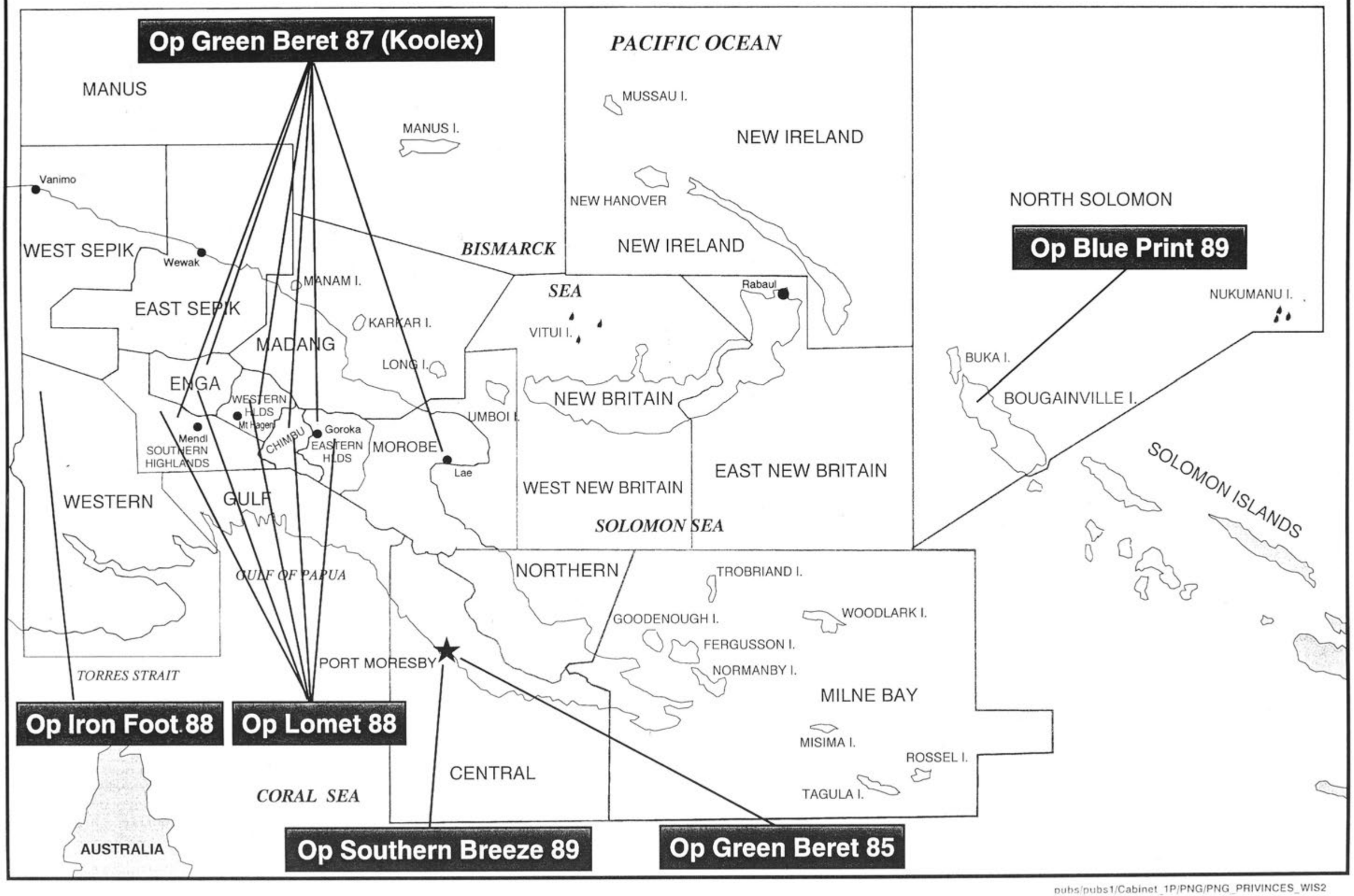
matter of time, that environment would create for the PNGDF a central role and with it a stronger voice in the running of the country.

As the decade drew to a close, the PNGDF changed direction. The Vanuatu operation had begun the 1980s, bringing success for the Force. The PNGDF had now assumed a more prominent role in assisting the civil authority in its fight against crime. Those operations posed problems for command and control, and logistics, and undermined training in counter-insurgency warfare. Soldiers had to come to terms with an erosion in their conditions of service and financial constraints in spite of an increasing commitment. As standards of discipline were undermined their motley state was out of step with their newfound status as an instrument of state control. Against that background, it was inevitable that soldiers' patience would run out in 1989. However, the unrest was shortlived as the PNGDF faced a new challenge — a secessionist war on Bougainville.

****

LAW AND ORDER OPERATIONS 1985 - 89

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



pubs/pubs1/Cabinet_1P/PNG/PNG_PRIVINCES_WIS2

Appendix 2 to
Chapter 6

PNGDF/RPNGC Operations
December 1984-March 1990

Dates	**Operation**	**SOE/Call-Out**	**PNGDF**
21 Dec 84- 8 Jan 85	*Santa Claus*	Call-out	Platoon
21 Jan- 21 Apr 85	*Hot Spot*	Call-out	Company
17 Jun- 4 Nov 85	*Green Beret 85*	SOE	Company
15 Apr- 31 Jul 87	*Green Beret 87* *(Koolex)*	SOE	Company
12 Sep- 12 Dec 88	*LOMET 88*	SOE	Company
22 Sep- 25 Sep 88	*Iron Foot*	Call-out	Platoon
30 Mar 89 12 Mar 90	*Blue Print*	SOE	Battalion
Apr 89	*Southern Breeze*	Call-out	Company

Appendix 3 to
Chapter 6

Port Moresby Gangs - 1987

(Post-Courier 20 May 1988: 11)

1987	1980	1975	1963	Suburb
KKK	KKK	Texas	Texas	Konedobu Town Ela Beach
Kips Koboni	Maggies GGB Rough Riders			Gabutu Badili
Apes	Koboni	Devils	Sabama Mob	Kaugere
	Macarthurs	Joe's Mob	Joe's Mob	Sabama
				Kila Kila Horse camp
Laddies Mafia	Fever Sons of Laddies	Amigos Japs Ebony Laddies		Hohola
Spikes Heltex Jawas	Heltex SOS	Pirates		Gerehu
Waga Jawas		Wanos		Waigani
Jawas	Jawas	Tokarara Rapex		
Raipex	Raipex	Raipex	Raipex	Tokarara
				Erima
G105	Kelly Co. Kaivas SOS G105 Disco 45	O B kako		Gordon Morata
Tigers	Tigers			Six Mile
			Four Mile Rascals	Four Mile
Bomai Apex	Bomai Apex Harlem Lords			Boroko East Boroko

Chapter 7

Bougainville (1988-90)

'the PIR is most likely to be used to maintain order or suppress secession within Papua New Guinea' (Nelson 1972: 207).

Introduction

In 1989, the PNGDF was to face its greatest challenge as a force for internal stability. In spite of the experience gained since 1984 and the mounting evidence since then that the PNGDF's future role rested with internal security, the PNGDF was ill prepared for the Bougainville unrest. On Bougainville, the cracks in military discipline would fracture and military leaders would be found wanting. Indeed, under international scrutiny, the problems dogging the PNGDF could no longer be hidden. In time, the Bougainville experience would have profound effects on the force, and flow-on implications for the authority of government.

Papua New Guinea was poorly prepared politically, economically and militarily for the unrest on Bougainville. The seeds of PNG's problems there had been sown in the years before independence when Bougainville's integration into the new state had almost slipped from PNG's grasp. Port Moresby introduced provincial government largely in response to Bougainvillean concerns. However, in the years that followed independence, successive governments did little to husband PNG's relationship with Bougainville, in spite of the singular importance of the Panguna mine to PNG's economy. When Port Moresby focussed on Bougainville issues, such as reviews of the mining agreement and during national elections, the government did not read a growing sense of unease among Bougainvilleans and a mood which led many to question their place in PNG.

Bougainville unrest would precipitate a challenge to state authority and subject the PNG state to international condemnation for its human rights abuses. For its part, the PNGDF's experience on Bougainville would set the scene for challenges, after the precedent set in 1989 when troops marched on Parliament.

The professional standards of the PNGDF had, since the Vanuatu deployment, been in decline. That decline was masked until 1989 by the Army's limited involvement in law and order operations, which did little to expose the

weaknesses of the Force. Leadership skills, too, declined and the minor role played by PNGDF officers in internal security camouflaged the depth of the problem, providing little incentive for these problems to be addressed. The police and the PNGDF became preoccupied with an internal security role, conducting quick-fix hardline operations as band-aid solutions to increasing law and order problems.

A Snapshot

North Solomons Province was named in the 1975 Organic Law on Provincial Boundaries, following the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) on the eve of independence in 1975. The Province incorporates the main island of Bougainville, Buka Island and the adjoining atolls, including Nissan (Green), Kilinailau, Mortlock, Nukumanu, Nuguria and the Carteret Islands. Buka and Bougainville Islands (See map) combined are 240 kilometres long and 64 kilometres wide at the widest point covering some 9000 square kilometres.

A Simmering Problem

Port Moresby had long maintained that Bougainville was, and must remain, an integral part of Papua New Guinea. PNG's stance was partly influenced, in 1988/89 as it was in 1975, by the need to control Bougainville's mineral resources. This was Australia's view when, as the colonial power, it insisted on Bougainville's incorporation in the PNG state at independence. Port Moresby's policy was thus historically driven. PNG's reliance on Bougainville's resources was reduced by other mineral prospects, at Porgera, Misima, Kutubu and Lihir, but the national government was not prepared to countenance secession, fearing that secession would have a domino effect, given separatist sentiment in other regions.

Several key factors lie behind the rebellion on Bougainville — the mine, poor colonial boundaries, *redskins*[102] and land. The precise beginnings of Bougainville's problems are a matter of conjecture. However, the recent tensions had their beginnings in the decision of the British and German colonial powers to incorporate Bougainville into New Guinea. Bougainvilleans consider themselves

---

[102] Bougainvilleans refer to their lighter-skinned countrymen as *redskins*.

closer to Solomon Islanders than to PNG, claiming they are a 'culturally, ethnically, historically and geographically distinct group from the rest of PNG' (Hannett 1975: 290). Indeed, Bougainvilleans have pointed especially to their black skins which set them apart from lighter-skinned islanders and come to have such important political ramifications (Oliver 1991: 224). These are strong arguments, which cannot be dismissed lightly.

Bougainvillean claims of being a race apart from PNG have not been accepted by all, least of all by the PNG government. Nor was the claim of a Bougainvillean consensus for independence accepted. Critics point to the extent to which Bougainvillean groups have been divided in the conflict, and to the traditional conflict evident in Bougainvillean history. Before European contact, `each district [was] in a constant state of war with its neighbours' (Oliver 1991: 101). By 1941, Europeans had ended `inter-tribal warfare [and] imposed a new form of territorial grouping ... which conformed only in part to traditional tribal boundaries' (Oliver 1973: 55). During the Second World War, however, in the absence of the Australian Administration, tribal conflict was revived. Tensions were never far below the surface nor was payback for past deeds forgotten. Conflict would again emerge in the 1988 rebellion.

The war experience had a marked effect on Bougainvilleans as it did in other Asian/Pacific areas. The Australians' defeat by the Japanese showed Bougainvilleans that the colonial administration was not all-powerful. Indeed, the `changes undergone in mental attitudes towards Europeans served to ensure that relations ... would never be the same as ... before the war' (Connell 1990: 45).

The chiefly system on Bougainville has been an issue of contention. The predominance of the matrilineal system, especially in relation to land ownership, distinguishes Bougainville from much of the rest of PNG. Essentially, there are two types of chiefly system. In Wakunai, Buin and the Siwai,[103] chiefly status is derived by matrilineal decent — a feature also of the Panguna Valley. In other areas, tribes are `dominated ... by one particular matrilineage [or by] ... leaders [who] earned their positions of authority ... by ... military or political skill'

---

[103] Discussion with John Siau, former provincial secretary, NSP, in Canberra on 7 February 1997.

(Oliver 1991: 105). The extent to which such individuals influenced events and the degree of control each could exercise is uncertain. In early European settlement, the Germans, and later Australians, appointed village headmen, blurring the distinction among tribes. These were not always traditional chiefs.

In spite of the divisions among clans and language groups (Figure 7.1), Bougainvilleans traded with each other, and 'trade ... kept many otherwise warring tribes at peace' (Oliver 1991: 102). The Panguna mine also influenced Bougainvillean unity in several ways. The experience of `working together ... served to dampen ... intertribal hostility [among Bougainvilleans]' (ibid.: 109).

Figure 7.1

Bougainvillean Language Groups

(Oliver 1991: 4)

The same could not be said of relations between Bougainvilleans and other Papua New Guineans, referred to as *redskins*. Many *redskins* were drawn by employment opportunities offered by the mine, a process encouraged by the Australian Administration and the PNG government after independence in order to build a skilled national workforce. However, *redskins* had arrived on Bougainville before the mine. Due to the shortage of Bougainvilleans prepared to work on the plantations across the island, companies were 'obliged to recruit Chimbus [from the highlands] thereby helping to create ... inter-ethnic hostility' (Griffin 1990: 7). By 1990, the rebellion had seen off all but a few of the *redskins* and Bougainvilleans began to turn on each other.

With the arrival of the first Europeans in 1902, when Marist missionaries established a permanent residence at Kieta (Oliver 1991: 35), the church was to play a central role in Bougainvillean affairs. The Catholic Church spearheaded the religious crusade into Bougainville, presiding over 80 per cent of the province by 1988. Within twelve years of the Marists' arrival, missions had also been established at Buin, Koromira, Torokina and Buka increasing to twenty-one by 1939. The Marists took every opportunity to extend their influence, so much so that they zealously sought to monopolise indigenous education and win converts through medical aid (ibid.: 59). The Seventh Day Adventists and Methodists were also strong influences, especially in Central Bougainville (Griffin 1982: 116). Through religion, Bougainvilleans shared a common belief and with Catholicism predominant, religion was a unifying influence.

Cults created unity in some areas of Bougainville. Cults in central Bougainville worried early administrators. Officials established councils in an attempt to solve the problem of cargo cults and general disaffection among the *Nasioi*.[104] Still, cargo cults prevailed and often reappeared.[105] These cults — `a catch-all term — [had political connotations not intended by cult leaders and it was believed that] cultists [were] unlikely to fit the definition of an organised force out to supplant established authority' (Polomka 1990: 38). Yet cultists were

---

[104] For more detail on the Nasioi see Ogan (1974).
[105] For more on Bougainvillan cargo cults see Ogan (1974).

a feature of the rebellion in 1988. Widespread destruction of infrastructure after the security force withdrawal was attributed to cultic influences. The cultists argued that the island's future lay with traditional lifestyles without the trappings of Western influences.

The first secessionist murmurings began in 1968. Bougainvillean parliamentarians advocated secessionism that year. A coincidence of events probably accelerated independence as an issue among Bougainvilleans in subsequent years. Students at the University of Papua New Guinea formed the *Mungkas*[106] Society — a Bougainvillean pressure group. This was followed by the formation of a local Kieta group — *Napidakoe Navitu*[107] — on Bougainville which before long advocated secession, or new kinds of territorial alignments (Griffin 1982: 113). From its central location around the Panguna mine, the group exerted considerable influence over local tribes and created an awareness of secessionism as an issue further afield. The group lifted the stakes by seeking a referendum on secession in 1970.

Bougainvillean opinion was further polarised by a car accident in December 1972 in which a highland girl was killed when struck by a car driven by two Bougainvilleans. The two Bougainvilleans — Dr Luke Rovin and Peter Moini — were murdered in payback near Goroka (Eastern Highlands). Their murder resulted in demands for the deportation of all *redskins* from Bougainville. Longstanding ethnic issues came to the surface and Bougainvilleans became acutely aware of — and sympathetic to — secession as a political option.

Since early European contact, the people had played an active part in administration of the province. They were keenly sought after as policemen and soldiers as well as for bureaucratic positions. Later, many were active in academic institutions, both as staff and as students. So Bougainvilleans had a grasp of developments, both within the province and nationally. They had a sharpened sense of ethnic identity from their contact with other Papua New

---

[106] *Mungkas* comes from the *Telei* (Buin) word meaning black (Griffin 1982: 2).
[107] *Napidakoe* was an anagram of the names of ethnic villages in Kieta while *Navitu* means `grouping' in *Nasioi* (Griffin 1982: 113).

Guineans. With the onset of mining-related construction at Panguna, Arawa and Loloho, the separatist cause now had a focus. Still, the trigger for Bougainvillean calls for independence came not from the mine itself but from the move towards Papua New Guinean independence in 1975.

Bougainville unilaterally declared independence on 1 September 1975, prompted by a growing concern that the province was being neglected. There was ineradicable widespread secessionist sentiment which made the North Solomons a special case (Griffin 1990: 10-15); the 'colonial experience did little to create in Bougainvilleans a sense of a common destiny with other Papua New Guineans' (Griffin 1982: 113). The declaration, only days before PNG was due for independence (16 September), posed a serious challenge for the Somare government. Bougainvilleans had timed their move well, threatening to overwhelm Port Moresby on the eve of independence. The declaration of independence may have worked had it not been for the importance of the Panguna mine to PNG's post-independence economy. As so often is the case, the secessionists occupied `the wealthiest part of the state' (Prescott 1978: 267), a factor which worked against them. Somare was able to resolve the issue by conceding an interim government for Bougainville. Provincial government followed a year later. Bougainvilleans had been mollified because they were unsure of what they really wanted at the time (Oliver 1973: 190).

The Panguna Mine

If the issue was deferred in 1976, why did Bougainvillean patience run out in 1988? The catalyst for unrest in 1988 was undoubtedly the Panguna mine. Landowner bitterness over the environmental impact of the mine and the scale of compensation was compounded by ethnicity, dislike of *redskins*, and disputed colonial boundaries. The Panguna mine (Figure 7.2) was a massive development by any standard. During 17 years of operation, the mine produced revenue of K19 billion. Mine management offered an unprecedented (in underdeveloped countries) 20 per cent equity to the Administration and contributed K75 million to the North Solomons provincial government (Oliver 1991:121).

Figure 7.2

Panguna Mine

(Oliver 1991)

Hostility towards the mine began early, when CRA/BCL (Bougainville Copper Limited) entered the Guava mountains `uninvited' (Griffin 1990: 8) in 1964. For Bougainvilleans, the notion of trespass would prevail, heralding the beginning of an uncomfortable marriage between Bougainvilleans and the mining company. The Australian government further created tension when the then minister for territories declared that `the fruits ... of the Panguna mine would go to [PNG] as a whole and not the Panguna mine owners in particular, nor to Bougainvilleans in general' (Oliver 1991: 131). Bougainvilleans were incensed, a feeling of injustice exploited later by local politicians which served to escalate expectations of increased income (Polomka 1990: 61). In response to landowner pressure, the Mining Ordinance was changed. Problems persisted, however, because the Ordinance did not take into account land destroyed by mining, did not put aside funds for the island's development, and did not decide who were

landowners.[108] The latter issue meant that a small group of Bougainvilleans received benefits while others, including many with equal claims, were denied access to the funds.

Mine management accepted that the landowners had an entitlement to royalties and recognised that the landowners needed an organisation to control the use of funds for the longer term benefit of Bougainvilleans. The formation of the Panguna Landowners Association (PLA) in 1980 provided the means to achieve longer-term goals and a central body with which the mine and government could negotiate. BCL also set up the Road Mine Tailings Leases Trust Fund (RMTLTF) to benefit landowners.

Problems were not resolved for long. In 1988, younger Bougainvilleans around the mine who felt they had not benefited from the landowner royalties, demanded compensation. These formed the new PLA led by Perpetua Serero. Later, in January 1990, militants kidnapped and killed Mathew Kove, a member of the PLA, from Guava village. Militant attacks against fellow Bougainvilleans would lead to inter-tribal conflict and, eventually, civil war.

For the mine, other problems had been straining relations with Bougainvilleans. Staff and Bougainvilleans experienced difficulties in comprehending official identity and the nature of transaction (Oliver 1991: 113). Those difficulties undermined confidence in deals struck. Bougainvilleans were already suspicious of the mine. They were especially disturbed by the then Administration's assertion in the 1960s that all mineral rights (under the Australian Mining Ordinance 1928-40) belonged to the Crown — a rule entirely alien to Bougainvilleans (Griffin 1982: 122-138).

Disquiet among Bougainvilleans was not confined to the Panguna Valley. In the late 1960s, the acquisition of land for the construction of Arawa also led to unrest which was driven by `growing opposition to the forced sale of any Bougainville land' (Oliver 1991: 140). Ironically, the Arawa site was imposed on BCL (which preferred land further inland) by the Administration so as to `arouse

---

[108] No authoritative list of landowners was ever recorded. A more detailed account of the landowner issue is contained in Connell (1990: 43-46) and Oliver (1991: 120-129).

less opposition' (ibid.: 140). Publicity about the Administration's forced acquisition of land[109] was best illustrated in the now famous photograph of a *Rorovanan*[110] woman resisting an armed policeman.

Not all the blame for poor relations can be attributed to CRA/BCL. Disagreements between the national and provincial governments over relative shares of income also made for poor relations (Polomka 1990: 61). BCL points out that criticism over its handling of public relations with the Bougainvilleans fails to recognise that it was the national government — not the mine — which failed to include Bougainvilleans in the 1981 review of the mining agreement (May and Spriggs 1990: 11). As a result of the government's negligence, grievances were allowed to simmer for six more years until in 1987 Momis called for `a fresh start from BCL' (ibid.: 12). Indeed, Momis demanded, as part of his Bougainville initiative, payments of K12 million to the provincial government, a substantial increase over the K3-4 million per year paid (Post-Courier 6 May 1987: 1). No changes in royalty eventuated and tensions rose.

Political Issues

Port Moresby was justifiably concerned over tensions in Bougainville Province towards the end of 1988. Landowner unrest over environmental damage, especially to the Jaba River, was pronounced. Port Moresby had commissioned in July 1988 an independent report in response to landowner representations. Research by Applied Geology & Associates, New Zealand consultants, offered the best prospect of reconciling differences between landowners and the mine. Completed in November 1988, their Report was `critical of [BCL] but ... Bougainvilleans [felt that] it was not nearly critical enough' (Oliver 1991: 207). The report was the `spark which ignited the militancy which turned into a revolution' (ibid.).

BCL was well aware for many years that the `disposal of the mine's tailings [had been a] persistent ... headache' (ibid.: 136). Notwithstanding BCL's

---

[109] For more detail on the land issue see Ogan (1971).
[110] Rorovanans who occupied land in the area of present day Loloho and Arawa were 'descendants of ... Shortland Islanders [in the Solomon Islands]' (Oliver 1991: 122).

efforts to manage the problem, including through compensation, the highly-visible impact of mining served to remind landowners of the scale of change. Apart from the mine's immense crater — two kilometres across — villagers saw pollution of the Jaba River. The mine's tailings were `much greater than people believed [with] the river ... twenty times wider than in the pre-mine era' (Polomka 1990: 52). Photographs of the river seem to bear out Bougainvillean claims. Convincing them that mining was not seriously damaging the river would have been futile. Mine officials, however, asserted that within fifty years of the end of mining the river would flush itself of the tailings residue.[111] Such a timeframe would have little appeal for Bougainvilleans.

Landowners were concerned that Bougainvilleans were being denied their fair share of mining profits. The compensation and royalty issues had a chequered history. When mining began in the 1960s, the mine compensated landowners for `damage ... to their buildings, trees and gardens, ... but not to pay rent' to landowners (Oliver 1991: 126). In 1967, BCL negotiated the Bougainville Copper Agreement which under pressure from Bougainvillean MP Paul Lapun,[112] gave landowners 5% of the 1.25% of mining royalties' (Griffin 1990: 8). Re-negotiation of the Agreement, set for review every seven years, did not include the provincial government in 1981 though BCL argued for its inclusion (Polomka 1990: 63). Landowners' expectations of a substantial increase in payments, fuelled in campaigning for the national elections of 1987 by politicians such as John Momis, did not eventuate (May and Spriggs 1990: 12).

Bougainvilleans were already bitter that revenue from the mine was being used for the benefit of the rest of PNG. For them, the PNG national flag represented relations between the two groups — `a red half dominating a black half with only a patch of gold [the mine] in common' (Oliver1991: 225). These views had stirred secessionist feelings in the lead-up to independence in 1975, and eventually led to the declaration of independence on 1 September 1975. The

---

[111] In 1996, eight years after the mine closed, the Jaba River still shows signs of the mine tailings.
[112] Lapun was nicknamed the 'five per cent man' as a result (Sir M. Somare 1996).

failure to include the provincial government in the 1981 negotiations of the Copper Agreement, aggravated tensions and led to the 1988 rebellion.

Operation *Tampara*

Shortly after landowners demonstrated their displeasure over the environmental report by Applied Geology and Associates, problems began to develop. On 22 November, 'men looted ... explosives and detonators, complete with fuses and primer detonator cord for the timing of explosives, from the Panguna Mine magazine' (Post-Courier 25 November 1988: 3). In another incident on 26 November, `arsonists set fire to the BCL administration block causing K500,000 damage' (Post-Courier 29 November 1988: 4). In response, the government increased the number of police on Bougainville by two mobile squads (fifty men) and, on 5 December, deployed more police bringing the total number to 120. The squads provided extra manpower to handle special problems and they were more heavily armed, with semi-automatic weapons. Importantly, they had been successful in quelling unrest in the volatile highlands. Much of that success had been achieved by intimidation through weight of numbers and superior firepower — essential ingredients in tribal warfare.

On deployment to Bougainville (codenamed Operation *Tampara*), the mobile squads were used to protect the mine, following threats by militant landowners to blow up installations. The landowners made good their threat on 1 December by blowing down a power pylon at Pakia — part of the line supplying the Panguna mine. On 2 December, in spite of the police presence, `arsonists destroyed Camp 6 (the Pink Palace) at Loloho' (Post-Courier 5 December 1988: 2). On 4 December, another pylon was blown.

The groups responsible for the week of damage called themselves `Rambo 1, 2, 3 and 4' (Layton 1992: 307), giving them a sense of organisation and purpose. The militants carefully selected their targets. The power line was essential to mine production. The isolated location of the damaged pylons made repairs more difficult. In addition, the pylons were deliberately collapsed across the Port-Mine Access Road (PMAR) disrupting mine traffic. The closure of the mine, estimated to cost K1.4 million per day in lost production (Post-Courier 5

December 1988: 2), incensed Port Moresby, especially Police Commissioner Tohian. In a public statement, he instructed the police to `shoot to kill' (Post-Courier 7 December 1988: 1) — a statement which merely inflamed the situation.

The government in Port Moresby took a more practical view of events. The mine was crucial to the PNG economy, contributing 45 per cent of export revenue and 12 per cent of gross domestic product (May and Spriggs 1990: 38). deputy prime minister Akoka Doi agreed to meet rebel leader Francis Ona[113] and landowners at Guava Village. After the meeting, Doi confidently announced that the landowners had agreed to end acts of sabotage (Post-Courier 8 December 1988: 1). The meeting appeared for several weeks to have broken the cycle of violence. However, Christmas/New Year historically leads to a closure of government in Port Moresby and important follow up attention was not given to landowners' concerns.

Little wonder then that fresh threats were made against BCL on 4 January 1989 (Post-Courier 4 January 1989: 1). The water pump station on the Jaba River was the next target. After this, the government imposed a dusk to dawn (1800 - 0500) curfew for two months. Port Moresby wanted to reassert its authority[114] and to reassure non-Bougainvillean workers — *redskins* and expatriates alike. However the police, encouraged by Tohian's earlier order, took a tough line. Port Moresby increased police numbers to 300. Within a week, two police had been wounded in an ambush — the first security force personnel targetted by the militants. The escalation in hostilities declined after January with February incident free on Bougainville. As a result, the government relaxed the curfew on Bougainville from 2200 to 0500.

While the national government was pleased, political leaders faced a new and more immediate threat in Port Moresby in February. Disgruntled soldiers, mainly from 1 RPIR at Taurama Barracks, rioted over pay grievances. Parliament was attacked and an apprehensive deputy prime minister defused the issue by

---

[113] Francis Ona, a former mine worker, rallied landowner support, becoming the self-appointed leader of the militant secessionist movement in 1988.

[114] Port Moresby was also concerned that the events on Bougainville may lead to landowner unrest elsewhere in PNG.

publicly caving in to PNGDF demands. In the days that followed, the government stood down PNGDF Commander Lokinap[115] and Defence Secretary Mokis pending an official inquiry.

In the wake of the Port Moresby riots, the situation on Bougainville was about to take a turn for the worse. Two police were wounded at Aropa airport on 8 March. On 17 March, a Bougainvillean youth — Clement Kavuna[116] — died in suspicious circumstances while in police custody. The government had other problems in Port Moresby. In March, Prime Minister Namaliu was facing a vote of no confidence from opposition leader, Paias Wingti. The government was also having trouble with Police Commissioner Tohian, who was reprimanded for defying government policy. Tohian claimed he was misrepresented in the media but John Momis, Minister for Provincial Affairs, threatened Tohian with dismissal. Momis was justifiably concerned that authority needed to be asserted over the security forces. For his trouble, he was threatened on 6 March by a group of 100 police not to press for Tohian's dismissal. Police Minister Ijape's appointment of an investigating team to examine the incident did little to reassure people of the government's control over its security forces. Port Moresby would complicate its problems on Bougainville by not calling the police to account.

On 14 March, a new dimension was added to the general unrest in the province. Highland workers raped and killed a thirty-two year old Bougainvillean nurse — Deborah Raboni — at Aropa. Bougainvilleans, with the memory of highland killings in the early seventies, killed five Western Highlanders in pay-back. Inter-communal violence followed, with riots in Arawa. Aropa airport was closed. Later that night, the terminal was burnt down. Trouble also appeared in Buin, well beyond the mine area. With the curfew due to end on 23 March, and in response to Opposition calls for `firm, fair and decisive action' (Post-Courier 21 March 1989: 2), the government deployed 130 soldiers to guard installations.

---

[115] Brigadier-General Lokinap was not in Port Moresby at the time of the riots.
[116] Kavuna is said to have been a cousin of then PNGDF Lieutenant Sam Kauona.

Legal Issues

As early as December 1988, the police commissioner had requested the support of the PNGDF on Bougainville. The request was supported by the National Executive Council (NEC) and forwarded to the governor-general who authorised the call-out order on 23 December 1988, in accordance with the call-out provisions of the Constitution (Section 204)[117] (See Chapter 6). In April 1989 and following the deaths of two PNGDF members, the government came under pressure to authorise a state of emergency or to use the provisions of Section 205[118] to increase the powers of the PNGDF. The government acknowledged that the PNGDF needed increased powers, especially to deal with the insurgency now emerging. The Defence (Aid to the Civil Power) Regulation under Section 204 was amended authorising the soldiers to:

- search without warrant;
- arrest without warrant;
- overpower or neutralise any armed resistance;
- using force, disarm any person carrying an offensive weapon; and
- use such force as is necessary [when confronted by] armed resistance ... to effectively eliminate the armed resistance (Defence Aid to the Civil Power Regulations (1988).

The changes recognised the special nature of the Bougainville insurgency. The security forces were, for the first time since being involved in law and order operations, facing a serious threat from a well organised and armed opposition.

Operation *Blue Print*

The deployment of the PNGDF contingent, scheduled for 29/30 March, was codenamed Operation *Blue Print*. Colonel Nuia, then Chief of Operations, chose the name because, in his assessment, the operation would be markedly different from previous law and order operations. On Bougainville, the PNGDF would be fighting an insurgency. PNGDF experience on Bougainville, Nuia

---

[117] Liria (1993) claims that the Defence Force was deployed to Bougainville under Section 25 of the Defence Act. Rather, the PNGDF deployed under Section 204 of the Constitution.
[118] Section 205 (2) of the PNG Constitution provides for the use of the PNGDF in a war-like situation, including outside PNG, subject to parliamentary authority.

argued, would form the doctrine — the blue print — for future contingency operations (personal communication Colonel Nuia 5 November 1996). As a result of the call-out, Morobean Lieutenant Colonel Key, Commanding Officer 1 RPIR, conducted a reconnaissance on Bougainville in early December 1988.[119]

In spite of the military deployment, the government looked for new ways to settle the dispute. John Kaputin, the Member for Gazelle (East New Britain), was appointed to head a truce committee; however Kaputin reacted slowly, commenting that the 'Bougainville issue had been there for twenty years — what's the rush?' (Post-Courier 4 April 1989: 1). *Redskins* began to leave the province as militants attacked a government station in Torokina on 25 March; the trouble was spreading to the west coast of the island. The government boosted the PNGDF contingent, comprising one company, by a second company of ninety soldiers. That deployment was a gradual ratcheting up of the conflict.

The army contingent had no guidelines for their activities on Bougainville. They also had no legal cover for military operations. Instead, in accordance with the call-out provisions, troops could only deploy on police authority and with a police presence. At this stage, soldiers had no powers of arrest or search — these were only conferred later during a state of emergency. The rules of engagement stipulated that soldiers could only return fire if first fired upon. Weapons carried by soldiers were limited to semi-automatic types. The PNGDF, under the principles of minimum force, was not permitted to use machine guns, grenade launchers, mines or mortars. Nonetheless, Lieutenant Colonel Key ordered that machine guns be taken to Bougainville though these were not carried on operations until the declaration of the state of emergency, which came into effect on 26 June 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Key also had problems with his base area. Key selected Aropa beach as his support base and to house troops not deployed on operations. The site had the advantage of being close to Aropa airport (some five hundred metres) for resupply and the camp provided security for the airport. Key wanted to avoid locating the camp in close proximity to villages and he was keen

---

[119] Experience as military adviser to the Commanding Officer 1 RPIR 1985 - 88.

to stay away from plantations in the area. Key acknowledged that security was a problem but he had only one company in the initial deployment to assist police and provide camp security. Key's decision was criticised for other reasons.

The camp, located on a narrow peninsula with the sea on the eastern side, was exposed to view for several hundred metres and therefore vulnerable to fire. Security was poor. Indeed, `there were no routine clearing patrols ... [and] the perimeter was never cleared or patrolled' (Liria[120] 1993: 22). The main Arawa-Buin road also ran along the camp's western and southern side. Rebel agents could easily determine contingent strength; obtain details of the PNGDF's plans; or steal weapons and ammunition. The camp layout lacked organisation which did not reflect well on the PNGDF, given that the camp was in full view of all those entering or leaving Bougainville via Aropa airport. Observers noted that soldiers were dirty and unshaven. Key's problems were compounded as the escalating violence led to greater numbers of troops being deployed; he had left little room for expansion.

Key chose the campsite when the rebels seemed intent only on vandalism against the mine. The camp, part of a swamp, flooded after torrential downpours. In the absence of any vegetation, the site offered no respite from the tropical heat — even under tentage temperatures soared. The camp did not have access to fresh water. In time, the burden of transporting water, even using borrowed BCL water trucks, became too much. The camp was relocated to the north-western side of the airport but this was only marginally better. As the focus of military activity centered more on the mine, the troops moved to Panguna in July.

Soldiers were initially employed on guard duty at the mine and around the PNGDF camp at Aropa airport. Few were left for forays into Central Bougainville in search of Ona. On 5 April, within days of the contingent's arrival, the PNGDF issued an ultimatum to Ona to surrender by 6 April or soldiers would be sent to arrest him. By law and in the absence of the police, the soldiers had no powers of arrest under the call-out provisions in effect in April 1989. The

---

[120] Liria drew on his Bougainville experience as an intelligence officer on Bougainville during 1989 to write his book *Bougainville Campaign Diary*.

PNGDF could not carry out the threat and would pay dearly. The PNGDF was beginning to act as a separate entity to the police for the first time since it began assisting the police in 1984.

On 6 April, Key sent one platoon to the road junction near Orami village (See map) to control movement in the area. While there, the platoon commander, Lieutenant Yandu,[121] was instructed to investigate reports of criminals at Orami. Yandu cleared the village without incident. He then led his patrol back towards the road junction but without the same measure of security. Militants ambushed the group shortly afterwards. His batman, Private Lomas Jaruga (also known as Martin Romas) (Kokoda), was killed outright while Lieutenant Yandu (Sepik) died before reaching medical aid. Soldiers from Yandu's platoon, on learning of his death, panicked and grouped together according to *wantok* alliances for protection — *wantok* rather than military drills dominated the soldiers' action (personal communication Colonel Nuia of 15 October 1996).

Port Moresby reacted to public outrage by claiming that the militants had weapons from foreign sources. The claim was false but helped explain the PNGDF deaths at the hands of a few poorly-armed militants. Defence Minister Marsipal asserted that soldiers were `now in the front line [replacing the police] with orders of shoot to kill' (Post-Courier 11 April 1989: 1). In the escalating violence, the police were only too happy to step back and let the soldiers bear the brunt of militant attacks.

Following the killing of the two PNGDF members on 6 April, the militants were involved in several other incidents that month, including the wounding of another soldier, damage to more pylons and an arson attack on the Tinputz government station. Faced with increasing casualties, Port Moresby turned its attention to setting up a more efficient casualty treatment system. Lieutenant Yandu had died because prompt medical attention was not at hand. Defence Minister Marsipal specifically wanted a helicopter for medical

---

[121] Lieutenant Yandu was appointed just prior to deployment, replacing Lieutenant Kaliop who was moved to fill the second in command position after the incumbent was arrested for dangerous driving on the eve of the contingent's departure (personal communication Lieutenant Kaliop, May 1995).

evacuation. That led to the provision of a civilian S76 *Sikorsky* helicopter[122] on 24 April under commercial arrangements, one day before the wounding of another soldier and a policeman. The helicopter would play a significant role in operations (Liria 1993: 39). Exploratory talks with the Australian government over the acquisition of helicopters under the DC Programme also began.

Meanwhile, the government offered landowners increased equity (9 per cent) in the mine in order to end the violence. While the proposal was being considered, Namaliu reshuffled his cabinet to shore up his fragile coalition. In an ill-planned action, the security forces, over a three day period, allegedly tortured some Bougainvilleans and burnt Anganai village near Arawa, destroying twenty-five houses (Post-Courier 21 April 1989: 2). The 'burning [of the villages] was intended as a lesson, a punishment' (Liria 1993: 46). The police also assaulted workers from the Kieta-based National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). The assault alienated media representatives who could have proved invaluable in supporting restoration of authority in the province. Combined, the actions of the security forces undermined any prospect that landowners would accept Port Moresby's offer. That same day Private Buka (Manus Province) was killed at Sipuru. Three PNGDF were wounded in the same area a week later. The militants again turned their attention to the mine. On 15 May, several BCL workers were wounded — the first time mine staff had been attacked. BCL management closed the mine, increasing pressure on Port Moresby to introduce a state of emergency.

The militants kept up the pressure, wounding Michael Bell, an Australian mine employee and former district officer. The motives for the attack — the first on an expatriate — may never be fully known. The incident may have been simply an escalation in the conflict; one of many. Some, however, allege that Bell was a deliberate target because of his earlier association with the development of the mine. In any event, other BCL workers were targetted on 23 May and more pylons damaged. Expatriates began to leave Bougainville.

---

[122] A civilian contractor flew the helicopter.

Port Moresby's response to the latest shootings was to establish a two week truce with effect 24 May. Francis Ona, the rebel leader, was invited to negotiate a surrender on the basis that he and other rebels would be given immunity from prosecution. However, the prospect of any settlement seemed increasingly remote as Namaliu received fresh reports of security force excesses. Soldiers assaulted John Price, an Australian, and burnt Pakia village as retribution[123] for the wounding of seven security force members on the Port-Mine Access Road. By May, about fifty police had already been withdrawn from Bougainville for disciplinary offences (Polomka 1990: 32). In time, many of those disciplined for misconduct were to return to Bougainville.[124] Liria reports that during 1989/90, `no attempt was made to instruct the troops [in the need for] a favourable approach towards the local population' (Liria 1993: 47). More casualties among the PNGDF heightened tensions on Bougainville. If Port Moresby was serious about controlling security force excesses, then the re-instatement on 21 June 1989 of soldiers involved in the February pay mutiny sent the wrong messages.

On 20 June 1989, the national government outlawed the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) (Figure 7.3). That had a two-fold purpose: to provide a legal framework under which BRA suspects could be tried, and to deter people in other areas of PNG from adopting similar organisations.[125] By outlawing the BRA, however, the national government provided further recognition of the militants as a secessionist army fighting for the province's independence. Under Kauona's[126] leadership, the BRA became `a formidable insurgency force' (ibid.: 76). The government's proclamation also gave the militants little incentive to desist from attacks on the security forces and jeopardized forthcoming operations.

---

[123] Liria (1993: 117) claims incorrectly that the PNGDF first torched villages during Operation *Bull Dog* (12-28 July). Soldiers (and police) were burning villages well before that date.
[124] Major De Markus, a PNGDF Company Commander, was withdrawn on three occasions for human rights abuses (personal communication Major De Markus November 1992).
[125] Port Moresby already knew of the Fly River Revolutionary Army in Western Province.
[126] Sam Kauona returned to Bougainville to fight with fellow Bougainvilleans in 1989.

Figure 7.3

BRA Outlawed

(Post-Courier 20 June 1989)

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND NEC

NATIONAL INFORMATION SERVICE

BOUGAINVILLE REPUBLICAN ARMY OUTLAWED

The National Government has outlawed the establishment of all private armies in the country.

This announcement follows the further trouble with the self-styled Bougainville Revolutionary Army led by militant leader, Francis Ona.

The Government decision means that raising and training of private armies is against the laws of Papua New Guinea and is strictly forbidden by our Constitution.

The penalty for raising and training a private army is a very serious one and carries an imprisonment term of up to 14 years.

The Government views the activities of members of the "Revolutionary Army" as persons deeply involved in terrorist activities on Bougainville and as a result, Police have been given wider powers to arrest members and associates of the outlawed Revolutionary Army.

The new powers also enable the police to bring the full authority of the law on anyone belonging to or assisting in any way, the members of the Revolutionary Army.

The only Military Force authorised by the Papua New Guinea Constitution is the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.

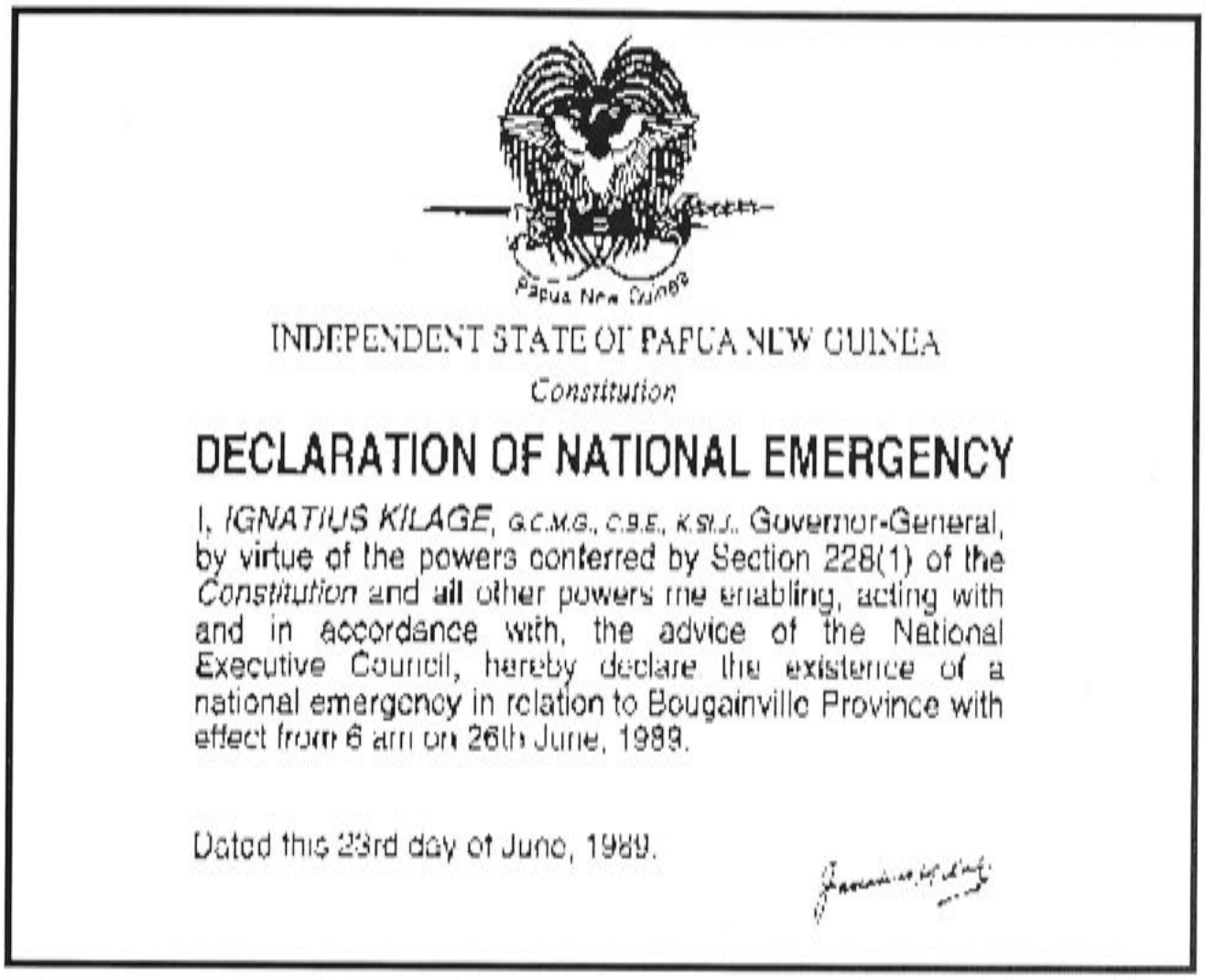
ER DIRO CHE OSI I MP
MINISTER FOR STATE

Prior to the state of emergency declaration on 26 June 1989 (Figure 7.4), the PNGDF had played a subordinate role to the police on Bougainville, in keeping with the call-out provisions. Activities were on a small scale — patrols, roadblocks and the protection of key points — usually in the company of police. The SOE plan set down three phases:

- Phase 1 Evacuation of villagers around the PMAR;
- Phase 2 Identification [and targetting] of pockets of resistance; and
- Phase 3 Rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Figure 7.4

Declaration - State of Emergency



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Constitution

DECLARATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

I, *IGNATIUS KILAGE*, G.C.M.G., C.B.E., K.St.J., Governor-General, by virtue of the powers conferred by Section 228(1) of the *Constitution* and all other powers me enabling, acting with and in accordance with, the advice of the National Executive Council, hereby declare the existence of a national emergency in relation to Bougainville Province with effect from 6 am on 26th June, 1989.

Dated this 23rd day of June, 1989.

The June 1989 declaration included special provisions for the command and control of the security forces and the conduct of the emergency. The Police Commissioner (Paul Tohian) was appointed controller and provision was made for the appointment of a deputy controller — Colonel Lima Dotaona, CBE — to command police and PNGDF elements on Bougainville.[127] The government's decision had important implications. While the civil authority still rested with the police, command on Bougainville was now exercised through a military officer — a structure which was arguably inconsistent with the Constitution. The appointment confused control arrangements with the police and PNGDF chain of command. While Dotaona was responsible to the police commissioner, located in Port Moresby, he relied on Headquarters PNGDF for logistic support. Dotaona was also required to work with the Provincial Peace and Good Order Committee.

---

[127] Personnel with the Corrective Institutions Services (CIS) serving on Bougainville also came under the command of the Deputy Controller.

As Port Moresby adopted a harder line on Bougainville, Australia issued a diplomatic warning note cautioning Australians about travel there. At about the same time, HQ PNGDF replaced Lieutenant Colonel Key with Lieutenant Colonel Walter Salamas (New Ireland Province). Salamas had served in 1 RPIR as the battalion second-in-command (2IC) in 1986/87. Indeed, he had been acting commanding officer in 1986 for six months during the absence of the then Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Vagi Mae, LVO. Salamas had also served under Lieutenant Colonel Key. In addition to his earlier experience in 1 RPIR, Salamas had the advantage of observing developments on Bougainville before assuming command. By the time he assumed duty as Commanding Officer 1 RPIR in late June 1989, Salamas was well prepared. He would not have an easy time of it. Faced with PNGDF indiscipline and escalating militant activity, Salamas would soon preside over military operations on a scale not seen in PNG since the Second World War.

The state of emergency got off to a bad start. On 3 July, a day after six police were wounded in separate incidents on the PMAR, members of a police mobile squad assaulted Premier Kabui and Michael Laimo, also a member of the provincial government. The attack on Kabui and Laimo was a direct challenge to the local civil authority under which the security forces were acting. Both Bougainvilleans were members of the Peace and Good Order Committee. Namaliu responded by sending a Parliamentary Committee[128] to investigate. The Committee, appointed to oversee the SOE and led by Sir Hugo Berghuser, arrived on Bougainville on 11 July — two weeks after the SOE came into effect.

In May 1989, prior to the conduct of operations under the SOE, Salamas decided to move the bulk of his forces to Panguna. The long period of deployment and the growing numbers of contingent personnel had seriously strained the logistics system. Even before Bougainville, the defence system was incapable of supporting large numbers in the field, especially over extended

---

[128] The Parliamentary Committee is required to exercise supervision of emergency powers on behalf of Parliament. Members cannot be Ministers and the Committee must be representative of all parts of the country (Goldring 1978: 232).

periods. The contingent commander consequently accepted offers of accommodation and rationing from BCL. The soldiers' presence enhanced the security of the minesite and enabled staff to build a strong relationship with the PNGDF. While the establishment of the base at Panguna served these purposes, the move away from Arawa also safeguarded the government and the PNGDF hierarchy from public exposure of the weaknesses besetting the PNGDF. Until March 1990, the PNGDF was rationed and quartered by BCL, a process which disguised the true cost of the security forces' deployment on Bougainville.

Operation *Nakmai Maimai*[129]

Lieutenant Colonel Salamas, having decided to move his troops to Panguna, planned an operation — codenamed *Nakmai Maimai*[130] — to clear the road route to the mine for the safe passage of his forces (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Salamas of 15 November 1996). (The codename in a local language in New Ireland Province means `lonely leader'.) The operation began in the early hours of 3 July with the evacuation of villagers from Poromai, Sideronsi and Porakake. Dotaona wanted to reduce the possibility of civilian casualties and to isolate the militants from the civilian population. Dotaona's operational plan called for the concentration of 1 RPIR elements along the PMAR to clear the road and its environs of the military threat (Appendix 2). The operation was riddled with problems and doomed from the beginning. Poorly planned, with insufficient time and insufficient troops, success was superficial (Liria 1993: 48). By their action in first evacuating the villages in the area, the PNGDF had lost the element of surprise. The militants escaped the area or prepared ambushes.

The operation called for the clearance of twelve kilometres of road and the searching of sixteen main villages. Even allowing two hours for village cordons and search, and the movement of two companies at less than one kilometre an hour, the task could not have been completed in six days. More importantly, the clearance of the road was an impossible mission unless a large force remained in

---

[129] Liria (1993: 38) refers incorrectly to this first PNGDF operation as *Tampara,* which was the police codename for its deployment to Bougainville.

[130] For security reasons, codenames should contain two words, which bear no relationship to the intended operations and should not contain colours.

the area to prevent rebel reoccupation. Dotaona's claim, six days later, that the road was secure (Post-Courier 6 July 1989: 1) gave a false sense of security to the government, the mine and the people. The plan was essentially a show of force (personal communication Brigadier-General Singirok of 16 October 1996).

Troop morale was also low — the PNGDF had suffered three fatalities in four months. Soldiers `found themselves in a frustrating and hostile environment socially as well as physically' (Fraser 1989: 33). Moreover, the PNGDF had been unsure of its role, confused over government policy which alternated between carrot and stick, and unsure of the true extent of the militant threat. Recognising the problems, the government acceded to defence requests for operational allowances to compensate the troops for service on Bougainville. Two allowances were paid: each member received an operational allowance of K15[131] per day and a patrol allowance of K2.50 per day. The government's generosity would add significantly to the cost of operations. Some officers and soldiers supporting operations from Port Moresby also claimed the allowances as did those in support bases in Rabaul and on Nissan Island. Service on Bougainville quickly became a lucrative business. In the long term, soldiers would become so used to the higher pay levels that problems would arise when these ceased on their return to the mainland.

On 29 June, only days before Operation *Nakmai Maimai*, B Company, 1 RPIR, which had been given the task of clearing the road, staged a mutiny. Patience among B Company members had run out. Mutiny by soldiers on operations was a serious offence. In the case of the PNGDF, such mutinous acts were not uncommon. In 1987, for example, B Company, 1 RPIR, had refused to obey the orders of the company commander.[132] Given the background of security force indiscipline, the PNGDF Commander on Bougainville or in Port Moresby should have taken prompt and severe disciplinary action against B Company personnel. Instead, the task was reallocated to A Company.

---

[131] Later, the allowance was increased to K25 per day.
[132] Author's experience as a military adviser in 1 RPIR 1985-88.

According to Liria (1993: 43), 'you should never ever negotiate a situation with a group of soldiers, especially in an operational area, where fear of death is the ... reason'. While I do not underestimate the difficulty of confronting armed troops in the situation described, the incident should never have been ignored. The indiscipline pointed to poor management of the contingent and poor leadership and training in the unit. By avoiding confrontation as officers of the PNGDF invariably do, indiscipline is encouraged. This was indeed the case, both for B Company on its next tour, and for other elements of the PNGDF.

Colonel Dotaona, Liria's commander, believed that discipline was essential. By Liria's account of another incident (1993: 98-99), Dotaona intervened to stop soldiers beating a villager. Dotaona was challenged by an officer — Lieutenant Markham (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Key on 17 April 1996) — and threatened with a weapon. Dotaona stood his ground and the officer backed down. Had PNGDF officers followed Dotaona's example, discipline might have been safeguarded; so too the human rights of Bougainvilleans.

During Operation *Nakmai Maimai,* PNGDF activity was not confined to the PMAR. After militants captured a military vehicle and two weapons near Guava village, close to the mine, a deliberate attack on the village involving C Company personnel was planned. Guava village, located on the Panguna Mine rim, was also the birthplace of rebel leader Francis Ona. A reinforced platoon began the attack at 0400 hours against the rebel force, estimated at about 10-20. Soldiers took the ridge after some four hours of fighting at around 1100 hours (personal communication Brigadier-General Singirok of 17 October 1996).

The then Operations Officer (1 RPIR), Major Singirok,[133] gave a public account of the *Battle of Guava*[134] which made front page news on the mainland — little wonder given that the government found good news from Bougainville hard to find. Singirok's account of the battle thrust him into the spotlight — as

---

[133] Singirok was appointed Commander of the PNGDF in December 1995 (and again in 1998).
[134] Liria (1993: 111) claims that the battle occurred during Operation *Bull Dog*. The date of the incident was on 7 July 1989, during Operation *Nakmai Maimai*.

happened later when he was a battalion commander on Bougainville in 1994. Still, the battle was little more than a skirmish in military terms. According to C Company soldiers, the militants were lightly armed with little ammunition and, except for two killed, withdrew shortly after contact was first made. Soldiers found that the rebels had used PNGDF training manuals at the site. The rebels' use of weapon pits (Figure 7.5) was for protection rather than any serious attempt to hold ground. Indeed, in 1989/90, the rebels had never sought to hold ground.[135]

Figure 7.5

Guava Ridge - After the Battle

(Post-Courier 7 July 1989: 2)

The report frequently referred to the militants as members of the Bougainville Republican Army (BRA) (Post-Courier 7 July 1989). Later, government officials acknowledged that Port Moresby's repeated use of the term Bougainville Republican (later Revolutionary) Army created a false image of a well-organised guerilla force fighting for secession on behalf of Bougainvilleans (personal communication with Mr P. Bengo (Secretary, Prime Minister's Department 1989) on 17 April 1996). Still, the PNGDF account gave the

---

[135] Rebels determinedly defended approaches to the Kongara in 1996 during a PNGDF offensive — codenamed Operation *High Speed II*.

government some good news, vindicating the hardline approach taken under the SOE and showing promise of an end to the troubles on Bougainville. Port Moresby also gained the (false) impression that the militants were off balance and receptive to a settlement.

During Operation *Nakmai Maimai*, the PNGDF used the Mortar Platoon for the first time on Bougainville. The platoon had been deployed to provide protection and to gain experience even though the weapon's use was not consistent with the principle of minimum force on SOE operations. In any event, mortar fire with a range of 3.7 kilometres proved to be ineffective against the rebels (See also Liria 1993: 117). Rebel groups were rarely large enough to justify the use of the mortars in an offensive or defensive role.[136] The ammunition was expensive and because of its weight and special handling requirements, even small quantities added considerably to the logistic effort in resupplying the army on Bougainville.

The mortar platoons had had problems before Bougainville. The platoons had long been under strength, lacking qualified personnel. The weapons were in poor order. Barrels were worn and the sights for the mortar tubes were not calibrated. There was only one current, qualified mortar line officer for both platoons, which meant that live firing was contingent on his availability. Range practices — required annually to maintain skills — at the only approved PNGDF range, at Urimo Training Area, near Wewak, had been largely abandoned. The mortar platoon on Bougainville relied on maps, which were not accurate, especially regarding village locations, and the fall of shot was difficult to observe. Few battalion officers had recent experience at adjusting mortar fire. Overall, the use of mortars on Bougainville was risky business — for both sides.

Headquarters PNGDF was negligent in approving the mortar deployment and the release of ammunition. The use of the mortar platoon on 10 July at night on Guava village was irresponsible and indefensible. Little wonder that,

---

[136] Integral to the infantry battalion, mortars are used against enemy in the open or in defended positions and to provide a smoke screen. While still useful in thick vegetation, the effectiveness of mortar fire is limited by the controller's inability to observe the fall of shot.

following the incident, Headquarters PNGDF issued orders that mortar use was to be approved by Port Moresby. Those directions were ignored when on 18 July during Operation *Bull Dog*, the mortars fired on suspected rebels near Musinau village. The mortars would be used again, often deployed as sections (two mortar tubes), over coming years. Mortar rounds often fell indiscriminately, wounding civilians and terrorising the local population. Soldiers confirmed later that the mortars were fired regularly, especially at night, without adequate controls. The PNGDF even fired the mortars from its ships — a notoriously unstable platform and dangerous for the troops involved. The PNGDF's use of white phosphorous rounds (WP) attracts particular condemnation. WP burns the skin and can drift well beyond target areas. The mortars gave the PNGDF no tactical advantage in its fight against the militants — a judgement now conceded by Brigadier-General Singirok (personal communication 17 October 1996). In the end, mortars were out of step with what was essentially an internal security operation.

Operation *Bull Dog*

Flushed with apparent success during Operation *Nakmai Maimai*, a new operation — codenamed *Bull Dog* — was planned to commence on 12 July (Appendix 3). The codename was chosen because one of the objectives of the operation was to capture rebel leaders, including James Singko, deputy president of the rebel government and right-hand man to Francis Ona. Singko was said to have a face like a bull dog (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Salamas of 15 November 1996.) Dotaona planned to use the operation to clear the area around the minesite. Dotaona's focus on the mine was driven by political priorities. The reopening of the mine was vital to the PNG economy. Before that could occur, the militant threat to the mine had to be removed. To facilitate further operations, the government extended the SOE for two months from 16 July.[137] The day before Operation *Bull Dog* commenced, the Parliamentary Committee for the supervision of the SOE arrived on Bougainville. At Namaliu's

---

[137] The original SOE was declared for four weeks from 26 June 1989.

direction, the committee was to investigate reports of human rights abuse by the security forces. Facing renewed operations against the militants and with two more soldiers wounded on 10 July, the PNGDF was not receptive to what they perceived as political interference.

The tactical plan was to deploy three companies into the area south of the minesite. One company (A/1 RPIR) was to clear the western side of the Jaba River to Isimon (See map). Another company (D/1 RPIR) was to clear the eastern side of the river. That company, on reaching Isimon, was then to clear north-east as far as Bopam. A third company (C/1 RPIR) was to patrol east to clear Guava, Musinau, Mt Kupara and Kupei village. The three companies were in little danger of accidentally contacting each other, especially with the well-defined Jaba River between the closest companies. However, the rebels also had every opportunity to escape, as many did.

The slow moving companies, faced with difficult terrain and thick vegetation, and the need for A and D companies to stay abreast of each other, effectively lost the advantage of surprise when the advance began from Panguna. Also difficult to understand, given the co-ordination needed for A and D company operations, is why the Battalion headquarters did not accompany the force as is usual practice when two companies are operating in concert. No blocking force was in place to the south or east and much of the area south of the mine was not covered in the operation.

Reinforcements were difficult to deploy and casualties, including non-battle injured, could only be evacuated by carriers. This meant weakening the strength of the patrol or abandoning the operation. Patrolling in groups larger than a section strengthened the force, but the soldiers were difficult to control in thick vegetation. Shortly after deployment on the PNGDF's first operation into the Kongara (Operation *Kisim Dog*), patrols grew to platoon or company size[138] (See also Liria 1993: 124). These invariably made a lot of noise and were

---

[138] The PNGDF claimed that larger groups improved control by utilising company or platoon radio communications — sections had no radios — and these larger groups could counter any rebel threat. However, the groups were formed largely to build confidence among the troops.

slow moving, and the rebels were easily able to evade contact or create confusion by surprise attacks. Sub-units were spread over large distances by the nature of the terrain or channelled along narrow paths. Resupply of these large groups was a logistic nightmare, taking time and resources. Surprise was lost with resupply aircraft revealing company locations to the rebels.

Even so, Operation *Bull Dog* was proclaimed a success on its conclusion on 28 July, largely because of the high profile military presence around the mine. The soldiers had managed to kill Ona's younger brother — Ambrose Leo — on 19 July in a chance encounter (Post-Courier 19 July 1989: 1). Mine management welcomed the effort and foreshadowed the mine's reopening as soon as repairs could be completed. However, optimism about the success of the operation was misplaced. Although additional troops were deployed during the operation — three companies were involved — the area to be cleared was beyond their capacity in the time allowed. The minesite was 8 square kilometres. To achieve success, soldiers would need to conduct `patrolling, searching and ambushing [with] a high degree of battlecraft, personal fieldcraft and teamwork' (McKay[139] 1987: 187) over a sustained period, coupled with good leadership.

During Operation *Bull Dog*, Liria (1993: 176) claims that arrangements were made to whisk Francis Ona out of Bougainville for negotiations with Namaliu on or around 19 July. Liria further claimed that knowledge of the plan was limited to several key officers and the prime minister. However, the then secretary of the Prime Minister's Department and the then commander of the PNGDF have dismissed the notion of a clandestine plan to fly Ona from Bougainville. Liria's speculation coincides with rumours at the time of Ona's presence in Madang, generated by the belief that Ona was visiting his wife who came from Karkar Island, Madang Province.

On 31 July, two soldiers were wounded at Arawa. Only four days later the long awaited Iroquois helicopters — in April Australia had agreed to provide four helicopters under the Defence Co-operation agreement — arrived on Bougainville

---

[139] Gary McKay served as platoon commander in Vietnam (where he was awarded a military cross for valour under fire). Vietnam operations were similar to those on Bougainville.

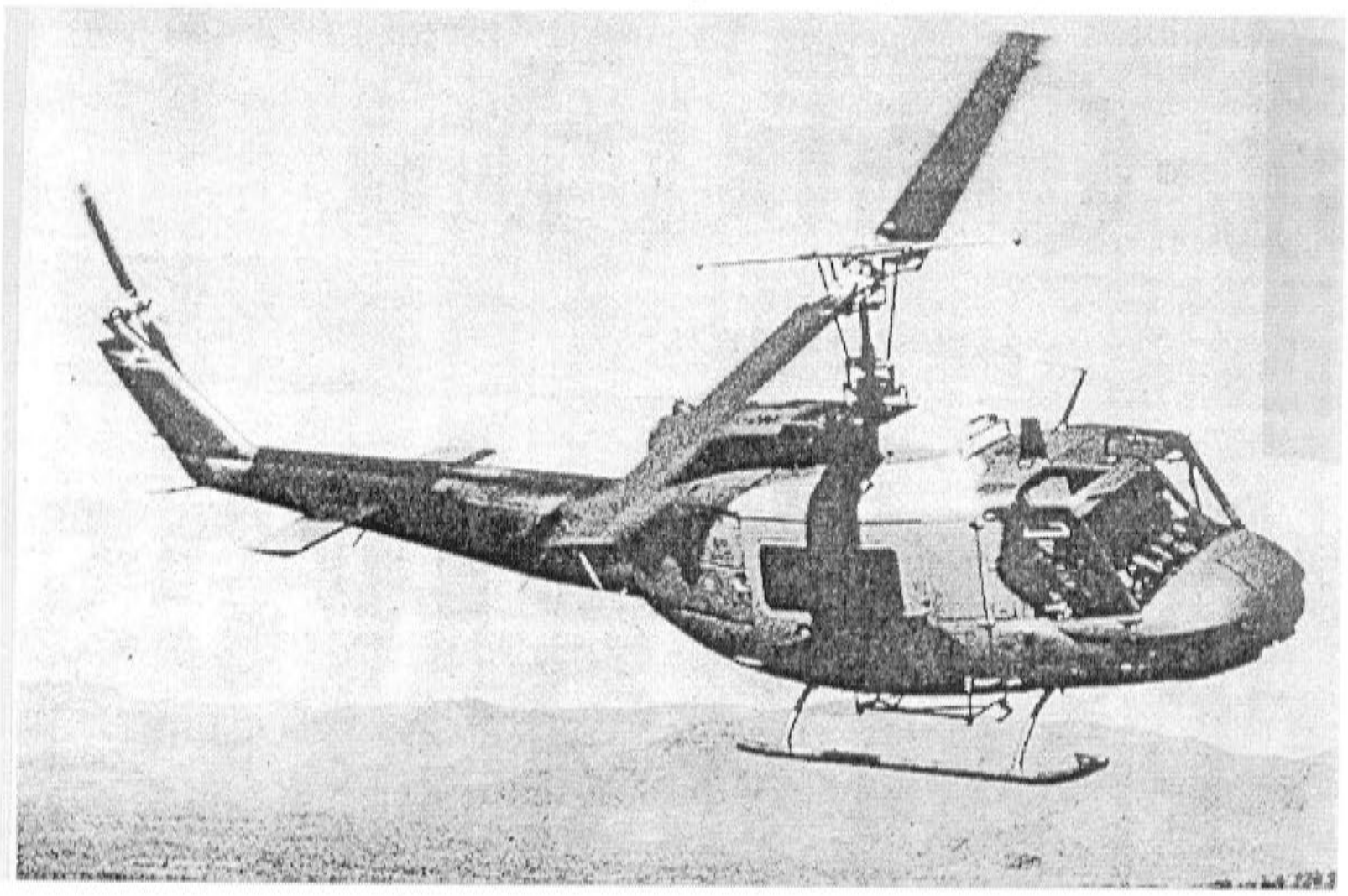
(Figure 7.6). The helicopters proved valuable, offering a medical evacuation capability. As such, their arrival provided an important and timely morale boost for the contingent. However, the helicopters came with conditions imposed by Australia and accepted on behalf of the PNG government by Prime Minister Namaliu. They were to be used for troop transport, patrolling, surveillance and medical evacuation. The conditions prohibited the:

- use of the helicopters as gunships;
- arming of the helicopters; and
- use of the helicopters [as platforms] for offensive fire.

Figure 7.6

PNGDF Iroquois Helicopters

(Post-Courier 4 August 1989: 4)



Australia's concern in providing the PNGDF with helicopters was that the militants could construe the act as `military assistance to PNG, [prompting] the rebels to retaliate against Australians on the island' (Senator G. Evans July 1989). In the event, Australians were attacked though probably for other reasons. The question arises as to whether the rebels appreciated the subtle qualifications to

Australia's charity. In spite of the conditions imposed by Australia, the four aircraft were quickly improvised as gunships (discussion Lieutenant Colonel Salamas 15 November 1996) (See also Liria 1993: 113). Indeed, offensive fire was regularly directed from the helicopters at suspected targets, including villages. Soldiers fired machine guns attached by rope, and grenades from grenade launchers (M203/M79) or simply dropped grenades into villages.[140] The conditions were violated and the Australian government was shown evidence of such instances (Channel 7 *Sunday* programme July 1989), but little was done to enforce the prohibitions — something which the PNGDF quickly realised.

The `gunship' issue confused the debate over whether the conditions had been breached. Gunships, in the military sense, include helicopters which have been fitted for that role with mounted machine guns (such as the General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) M60 or mini guns) and/or rockets.[141] The image frequently conjured up is that of the Iroquois helicopters used in Vietnam. The PNGDF has never attempted to fit *fixed* weapons to the Iroquois and so never breached the conditions in that sense. However, Australia was also concerned that the helicopters were not used as gun platforms for offensive fire against ground targets — by mounted or temporarily mounted weapons. That distinction was lost by continual reference to gunships, especially by the press.[142]

Operation *Kisim Dog*

By August, the PNGDF was becoming frustrated and agitated over its inability to counter the rebels (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Salamas of 15 November 1996). The PNGDF decided to go after the rebels and their leaders in their Kongara[143] stronghold. On 4 August, militants sabotaged the Mt Takanait repeater station, effectively closing down communications links with Bougainville for two weeks (Post-Courier 4 August 1989: 2). Only one of NSP's three repeater stations remained untouched — the facility at Mount Bei on Buka

---

[140] Soldiers confirmed these routine activities in various discussions in 1989/90.
[141] Weapons mounted on the aircraft frame are capable of more accurate fire than are weapons attached by *ad hoc* means.
[142] The PNGDF also used its *Arava* aircraft to engage suspected rebel targets.
[143] The Kongara extends from the Panguna mine to the Beuta Mountains in the south and to Sipuru/Kuritave/Meridau villages as far as the Crown Prince Ranges in the east.

Island. On 4 August, the PNGDF launched Operation *Kisim Dog* (meaning to catch or get the dog (rebels)). The concept of that operation was to 'close in on the BRA's Kongara area and eliminate the rebel leadership and its forces' (Liria 1993: 123) (Appendix 4). The PNGDF's objective is worth further examination if only because the concept was to influence future operations, as late as 1996.

As Liria noted, `senior military officers strongly differed on the mission of the security forces on the island' (1993: 121). One group, which included Colonel Dotaona, saw the PNGDF's primary role as protecting the mine and government infrastructure. Others, especially Colonel Nuia, who was appointed deputy controller in September 1989, believed that to end the problem and regain the initiative, an all-out attack on the rebel stronghold was required. While either option or a combination of the two had merit, both required large forces and a committed effort to achieve success.

Operation *Kisim Dog* had another flaw — the operation would only work if the BRA stayed to fight. PNGDF intelligence showed that the rebels were members of disparate groups spread throughout the Kongara and beyond. The PNGDF also knew from their experience so far, including on Guava Ridge (7 July), that the rebels did not attempt to hold ground. So at best, soldiers would be looking for lone militants or small groups who might appear fleetingly or merge with the local population. Militants could also attack soft (undefended) targets elsewhere as they had done at Mount Takanait in North Bougainville.

In part, the PNGDF command realised the problems, including the difficulty of covering an area of fifty to sixty square kilometres of difficult terrain, often at high altitude, and covered by thick vegetation. The PNGDF intended to counter the elusiveness of the rebels by conducting the operation at section level supported by helicopters. The PNGDF also gambled on meeting rebel groups less than four militants in number and poorly armed. The soldiers would saturate the area with twenty to twenty-five groups. However, the sections would require good leadership, excellent navigation skills, professionalism and confidence, and close co-ordination. These conditions could not be met. In any case, a section of ten soldiers was insufficient to cordon and search and to protect itself while

clearing a village. From the beginning, fear spread among the PNGDF that 'five to ten men could not survive on their own' (ibid.: 148).

In spite of the odds, troops deployed to their pre-assigned positions. Major Kasey Rovae (B Company) deployed to Sipuru, Major Doug De Markus (A Company) to Kuritave and Major Donny Bouwe[144] (D Company) to Moru-Meridau. During the deployment, mortars were used against a cave complex in the Beuta Mountains, which was believed to be used by a militant group. Little was achieved though a militant mess hut and some bush accommodation were found further north and destroyed (personal communication Colonel Nuia of 15 October 1996). Within eleven days, the troops were recalled to Panguna. By then, the PNGDF claimed to have swept the area and cleared the rebels (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Salamas of 15 November 1996). Shortly after the operation began, the rebels pressed for talks, insisting on the withdrawal of the PNGDF as a pre-condition. The rebels had used that approach as a tactic to reduce military pressure and to keep Port Moresby off balance — a tactic which irritated the PNGDF and prompted criticism of the government in Port Moresby.

Events of the next few weeks would not favour the PNGDF. On 17 August, soldiers manning a roadblock shot at a car, which failed to stop. The occupants of the car were off-duty soldiers; one, Private George Mena (ENB) was killed and another wounded — the first casualties through friendly fire (Post-Courier 17 August 1989: 1). On 29 August, soldiers killed two women in an ambush at Kuritave. It remains unclear why soldiers were conducting operations during the ceasefire and the PNGDF came under immediate pressure to explain the incident. Lieutenant Colonel Salamas later claimed that the incident was a case of mistaken identity; the women were travelling at night with suspected rebels. The PNGDF objected to the scrutiny, especially from their government.

On 1 September, Lieutenant Colonel Salamas ejected the Parliamentary Committee from Panguna, in part prompted by the treatment of the contingent over the last month. Salamas was also annoyed that he had not been informed of

---

[144] In 1991, Major Bouwe committed suicide in Port Moresby.

the visit in advance (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Salamas of 15 November 1996). The incident resulted in Salamas being removed from his command on 14 September and replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Trongat,[145] a Buka Islander. (A month later, Trongat was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel Tamegal,[146] an engineer officer.) However, the PNGDF's problems would continue. On 6 September, the Panguna mine restarted only to stop eight hours later when militants shot BCL workers on the PMAR — the very road which the PNGDF claimed was cleared after Operation *Nakmai Maimai*. Four days later, one soldier [Private Simon Ou'u (Oro)] was killed and another three injured when their vehicle overturned on the PMAR.

The government, however, was enjoying some success in brokering a solution to the problems on Bougainville. John Bika, a minister in the provincial government, had prepared a peace package, which provided greater autonomy for Bougainville. The night before the package was to be signed (11 September),[147] Bika was assassinated by militants. The message was clear, the militants wanted nothing short of secession. On 18 September, the government was further embarrassed. A soldier setting up a booby trap was accidentally killed. News of the booby traps reached a public still shocked by the rapid deterioration of the Bougainville situation. Members of the security forces had died. The Panguna mine — central to PNG's economy — was closed with seemingly little prospect of opening. The militants, a ragtag group of hill people, had so far defied large and expensive efforts to bring them to justice. Now, soldiers were resorting to home-made booby traps as a weapon. Even the militants, who had proved adept at using explosives, had not resorted to such primitive methods. The public demanded to know who authorised the PNGDF to use booby traps and why the army was now using these devices.

Why indeed! Booby traps require special expertise to set up. They were

---

[145] Colonel Trongat died in 2000.
[146] Lieutenant Colonel Tamegal died of a heart attack in Port Moresby in 1995 aged 42.
[147] Authors vary on the exact date of Bika's death. Oliver (1991: 220) claims Bika died on 10 September while Dorney (1990: 142) and Polomka (1990: 81) claim the date was 11 September. My source is the PNG Times of 2 May 1991 *The Bougainville Crisis Chronology 1961-91.*

not part of conventional PNGDF training. Training in the use of mines was largely confined to the claymore.[148] The decision to booby trap the pylons was driven by the belief that this was a cheap and effective method of safeguarding them. To be effective, mines and booby traps should be covered by fire to prevent them being removed by the enemy. The decision did not take into account that the rebels could remove the devices and use them against the security forces. Interestingly, in spite of the militants' explosives abilities, they never used booby traps in 1988/89.

Deputy Prime Minister Diro, who had resigned from the PNGDF in 1982, and was elected to parliament the same year, had become deputy prime minister and minister of state for the Bougainville situation. He had no hesitation in admitting he had ordered the use of booby traps. He went further by announcing the posting of rewards of K200,000 for rebel leaders — dead or alive. Diro stepped back however, when on 2 October another soldier — Lance Corporal John Mu'uh (Manus) — died in a second explosive accident. The PNGDF had been dealt another blow; this was the fourth occasion in which a soldier had died by accident. The PNGDF was managing to kill more soldiers than the rebels. The Minister for Defence noted that the PNGDF was experiencing `declining morale as a result of the tragedies among the [Force]' (Post-Courier 4 October 1989: 2). The government, faced with the apparent intractability of the Bougainville problem, also had its confidence in the PNGDF shaken. Defence Secretary Mokis commented that the `crisis has revealed fundamental weaknesses in the command structure and shows the Force lacks the capability to respond to internal security contingencies' (Post-Courier 4 October 1989: 2).

Criticism, especially from within the defence hierarchy, did little for the morale of the contingent. The soldiers had lost confidence in their leadership and they had little idea of Port Moresby's strategy. In the wake of the Bika killing,

---

[148] The claymore was devised as a means of breaking up massed attacks and to provide protection for defensive positions. The mine, a command-detonated directional device, mounted on four legs, can be fired in banks. Each mine fires seven hundred ball bearings.

the government decided that a harder line was needed. To achieve that, something had to be done to improve the performance of the PNGDF. Port Moresby appointed Colonel Leo Nuia, OBE, as Deputy Controller with effect 16 September on the recommendation of Brigadier-General Lokinap,[149] who considered Colonel Dotaona had not asserted military control (personal communication 17 April 1996). Nuia enjoyed a tough man image, preferring operations to administrative roles. Nuia also knew Premier Kabui, having met him in 1988 during Nuia's visit to a United States military action team on Bougainville.[150] Nuia was a hardliner with little sympathy for the secessionists.

The government, which had earlier authorised 200 additional troops for Bougainville (Post-Courier 17 August 1989: 1), gave Nuia three weeks to restore authority. Nuia introduced stricter curfew hours from 1800 to 0500 (instead of 2200 to 0500) and prepared for an offensive; an approach consistent with Nuia's long-held view that only by attacking the rebels in their stronghold could the crisis be resolved. Mine protection, he argued, was a job for the police. The PNGDF could achieve little by adopting a defensive posture around the mine. That decision spoilt PNGDF relations with mine staff and local authorities.

Before Nuia was able to start operations, the government announced that it would be pursuing a peace package with the landowners. A peace ceremony was set for Friday 27 October at which Prime Minister Namaliu would attend. The hope was that Francis Ona would also attend with members of the NSP government. Namaliu was under pressure for a withdrawal of the security forces from Bougainville, and facing another no confidence vote, he endeavoured to negotiate a settlement. Namaliu claimed that he `always believed in the value of dialogue and the negotiation process' (Post-Courier 3 November 1989: 2). The ceremony was given special significance as a traditional Bougainvillean way of resolving differences. The *breaking of the spears* as it became known (Post-

---

[149] Namaliu was not altogether comfortable with Nuia — in spite of being from the same area of East New Britain — but in the end accepted Lokinap's advice.

[150] The civic action team seemed unaware of any trouble brewing around the minesite (personal communication with the U.S. Team leader in Port Moresby late 1988).

Courier 30 October 1989: 1), went ahead but without Ona. On the same day, another soldier was wounded.

Namaliu resisted pressure from hardliners for stronger action. On 23 November, he extended the state of emergency for another two months but eased the curfew (2100 hours and 0400 hours). That day, a soldier — Private Boni Gau — was killed at Panguna. He was the eighth[151] PNGDF soldier killed since the deployment. The militants continued sporadic sabotage while in the south police mounted a special operation — codenamed *Seaside* — to clear the Koromira-Buin road of criminal activity (Post-Courier 23 November 1989: 2). Police would patrol the road as a matter of routine. That practice was later to prove fatal.

Namaliu met with Premier Kabui and representatives of the Panguna landowners in Rabaul on the weekend 25/26 November. The results were encouraging, with Namaliu declaring unanimous agreement on all major issues. The government set about a three-phased process designed to broker a ceasefire and lead to the eventual withdrawal of the security forces. By so doing, reconciliation could take place and, finally, negotiations to reach a settlement.

On 30 November, three police were killed at Aropa and several others wounded. They were the first police killed in the crisis. In the attack, the rebels stole six semi-automatic AR 15[152] rifles and ammunition. On 4 December, rebels burnt down the repeater station behind Arawa, thereby shutting down communications with the province. The Mt Kupara repeater station was an important link in PNG's communications network — one of three located in Bougainville Province — and the first public property targetted by the militants. Still, Namaliu persisted with peace, announcing a thinning out of the security forces in accordance with the Rabaul agreement. The rebels, flushed with success, increased the pressure.

Militant activity soon forced the withdrawal of public servants from southern Bougainville (Post-Courier 12 December 1989: 1). The security forces

---

[151] The Post-Courier (23 November 1989) claimed incorrectly that Gau was the ninth fatality.
[152] The civilian version of the US Colt M 16, the AR 15 (5.56mm) is one of the weapons on issue to the police mobile squads. The AR 15, unlike the M 16, has no automatic fire capability.

approved the plan, arguing that they could not provide security across the island. Rather, their forces should be concentrated in the centre — an approach also important to Nuia's plans for a large-scale offensive there. The withdrawal underlined Port Moresby's inability to enforce its writ and delivered the rebels an easy victory. Little wonder then that the rebels abandoned the ceasefire talks and demanded the full withdrawal of the security forces from Bougainville. Namaliu responded firmly, rejecting the rebel demand. He asserted that the security force presence was non-negotiable.

The national government was struck another blow when, on 29 December, BCL announced that 2000 staff at the mine would be retrenched from 9 January (Post-Courier 29 December 1989: 2). BCL reasoned that with continuing militant attacks, there was little prospect of the mine reopening. Rather, a caretaker staff would remain and the rest of the workforce would be free to leave. The BCL workers quickly joined the line of non-Bougainvilleans leaving the province. BCL's decision was a vote of no confidence in the security forces. Still, Colonel Nuia was pleased to be rid of the burden of mine security. Nuia used the BCL decision to promote his plan for operations.

Operation *Foot Loose*

By January 1990, Colonel Nuia had used the three months since his arrival to prepare for operations against the militants. Nuia had assembled an impressive array of military muscle. He had five companies, air support and a logistics base to support his operations. As he had long argued, Nuia abandoned mine security and concentrated his military forces against the rebel heartland. Nuia believed that the offensive[153] would destabilise the rebels, forcing them to abandon their bases. `Rebels on the run were more vulnerable to attack' (personal communication Colonel Nuia, OBE, of 19 September 1996). He chose, as the name of this operation, *Foot Loose,* which reflected his strategy of keeping the rebels off balance. The operation had two phases: phase 1 would force the rebels

---

[153] The same strategy was repeated in 1996 — against Nuia's advice. A PNGDF offensive — codenamed *High Speed II* — involved a battalion seaborne landing at Aropa airport and an assault into the Kongara. The attack stalled as troops, lacking helicopter support, confronted a hostile, well-armed rebel force. The operation was soon abandoned (see Dorney 1998: 124-144).

onto the run while phase 2 would see the rebels rounded up (ibid.:) (Appendix 5). The success of his strategy depended on:

- the concentration of security forces in the Kongara in a co-ordinated manner;
- the militants remaining in the area and engaging the PNGDF;
- a sound logistic system capable of supplying over 500 soldiers in dispersed locations for several weeks;
- a capacity to evacuate wounded soldiers quickly without detriment to the efficiency of the logistic system;
- good intelligence on the militants; and
- surprise.

Nuia's plan for *Foot Loose* was risky. He would be tying up most of the PNGDF in difficult terrain without the capacity to respond quickly to rebel threats elsewhere. By ignoring these issues, Nuia's plan risked unravelling. That would expose the government's tenuous position on Bougainville and, combined with human rights excesses, would deliver much sooner than expected a Bougainville free of Port Moresby's presence. Port Moresby failed to appreciate that unless threats against the militants could be backed up by the judicious use of force, it risked having its bluff called and relinquishing the initiative to the rebels.

Operation *Foot Loose* was launched on Thursday 11 January.[154] PNGDF elements deployed to Sipuru, Demberwei, Daratui and Rumba areas. Within hours of the PNGDF deployment, a soldier — Lance Corporal Karobata — shot and killed a woman and her child at Kuritave village. The soldier had followed a vehicle travelling without lights to a village. Suspicious, the soldier approached the village and fired into a hut, killing the woman and the child at her breast. He was charged and gaoled for manslaughter, according to Colonel Nuia (15 October 1996). The PNGDF too suffered casualties.

The rebels reacted to the PNGDF operation by mounting a series of well-orchestrated attacks. While the PNGDF was harassed in the Kongara, the rebels

---

[154] The next day the national government extended the state of emergency for a further two months. Another extension would not be necessary — troops were withdrawn from Bougainville two days before the SOE was to expire on 16 March 1990.

targetted other areas of Bougainville. The most devastating attack occurred on the night of 17 January. A band of rebels attacked Kuveria gaol, north of Arawa. Four CIS officers were killed and a further ten wounded. Several weapons were stolen. In anticipation of police reinforcements, the rebels set up an ambush at Manetai. Several police were wounded in the ambush.

On 24 January, the Australian government issued a second diplomatic advisory notice urging all Australians without essential business to leave Bougainville. In seeking to protect the safety of Australian citizens, the government was also conscious that Australia's policy position gave other foreign governments with citizens and investments in Bougainville a measure of the real situation. For Australia, the notices were a compromise between the safety of Australians and the risk of undermining Port Moresby's position. That explains why the notices were issued so late relative to the deteriorating situation on the ground. In publishing the second notice, Australia was also intent on reducing the number of people who might need to be evacuated if the situation worsened. Even as these measures were being put in place, the rebels were extending their area of operations, searching for soft targets.

Battle of Buka

A PNGDF platoon was garrisoned on Buka Island. This element was an *ad hoc* unit — part of a composite company (Golf Company) assembled at Murray Barracks before Operation *Foot Loose*. The soldiers were located at Buka township with a modicum of security — weapon pits were not well sited and soldiers lacked the ability to support each other in the event of attack. Soldiers were not expecting trouble as the rebels had not been active on Buka.

At around 2130 hours on 12 February, Bougainvillean rebels crossed Buka Passage undetected and attacked. Panic gripped the platoon. Amid the confusion, soldiers leapt into Buka Passage to escape. Four soldiers were killed — Privates Mark Barin (Madang), Allan Miria (Central), Maino Lakasisi (Central) and Mano Taguna[155] (Southern Highlands). Reports on the incident suggested that the

---

[155] Private Taguna was captured by the rebels, tortured, then killed.

soldiers were `irresponsible and careless' (The Times 22 February 1990: 1). Colonel Nuia conceded that poor security contributed to the PNGDF losses (personal communication of 19 September 1996).

The rebels had once again exposed the weaknesses of the security forces. However, the incident was significant for other reasons. The death of the four soldiers led to retribution by the PNGDF. Two days after the battle, on 14 February, six suspected rebels were executed in what became known as the St Valentine's Day massacre (See `Human Rights Abuses' below). The PNGDF casualties resulted in a renewal of the government efforts to broker a ceasefire.

From September 1989, a peace initiative was being developed by academics, including Graeme Kemelfield,[156] and the rebel leadership. Progress was made even as other peace endeavours, for example, the *breaking of the spears*, was occurring. As these collapsed and plans for Operation *Foot Loose* were being finalised, the academics put their plan to the government. They proposed consultation between the rebels and Port Moresby; a settlement which resulted in some form of relationship with PNG; and the involvement of international observers.

The plan showed promise and a ceasefire was brokered to take effect on 2 March 1990. The achievement was notable for two reasons. First, development of the initiative took three months, mostly in secret and against a backdrop of other peace initiatives seemingly offering better prospects of success. Secondly, the initiative was sold to a government which had run out of patience. Namaliu's willingness to try again is notable, given the fragility of his coalition.

Operation *Foot Loose* came to an abrupt end on 2 March when the government announced a ceasefire. Under protest, Colonel Nuia signed the ceasefire on behalf of the government. Within days, Port Moresby agreed to the withdrawal of the security forces from Bougainville. Some claim that the decision was made by Namaliu's chief of staff, Chris Haiveta, who came under pressure from politicians such as Momis (personal communication Mr Paul

---

[156] The initiative is covered in more detail in May and Spriggs (1990: 62-72).

Bengo, CBE on 17 April 1990). Others claim that the security forces withdrew unilaterally on Colonel Nuia's authority. The latter claim was given more credibility by press reports that Nuia snubbed the international observers and refused any handover on their arrival. This was not an accurate account.

Nuia was given explicit instructions by the national government through the PNGDF chain of command to withdraw all troops from Bougainville no later than 16 March (personal communication Colonel Nuia of 19 September 1996). Nuia first became aware of the need for a handover to the observers when Red Cross officials passed a note to him at Aropa airport. As Nuia had no government direction, he refused to comply, but rather carried out his original orders to withdraw by 16 March. Nuia was conscious at the time that by 12 March the rebels outnumbered the PNGDF on the ground. He had experienced rebel threats first hand when armed militants took his car at Arawa. Indeed, Nuia had been given a platoon by the Commander for protection as the last troops left.

The replacement of the security forces by an independent group of observers and the disarming of the militants were seen as preconditions for any talks to negotiate a settlement. Senior figures in Port Moresby, including Momis and Namaliu, believed that the security forces were contributing to the escalating violence through human rights abuses. The decision to withdraw the troops was an admission that Port Moresby had lost control.

On 16 March, the Australian government issued its third and final notice urging all Australians to leave Bougainville by the first possible means. On that day, Australian diplomatic representation on the island ended with the withdrawal of High Commission officers.

Port Moresby's plan could possibly have worked had a framework been first put in place to facilitate the withdrawal and the arrival of the observers. There were other problems with the plan. The militants went through the motions of collecting weapons — largely old or traditional types with little military value — and concentrated these at collection points. However, these were just as quickly returned to their owners rather than being destroyed once the observers departed. The militants had won an early and unexpected victory.

In spite of the precautions undertaken since November 1988, PNGDF contingency planning for Bougainville had serious shortfalls. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Key, had arrived on Bougainville only a week before the first PNGDF fatalities occurred. Prior to Bougainville, the PNGDF had been influenced by the experiences of earlier law and order operations. Then, the PNGDF had reinforced police authority against lightly-armed or unarmed civilians. The PNGDF underestimated the militants, dismissing the rebel threat as little more than gossip (personal communication Lieutenant Colonel Key of 16 April 1996).

The soldiers deployed to Bougainville in March 1989 were ill-prepared. The core elements of the first contingent were drawn ostensibly from 1 RPIR, which was based in Port Moresby (Taurama Barracks). In the four years before, the unit had been committed to six law and order operations — *Santa Claus 84, Hot Spot, Green Beret 85, Green Beret 87 and Lomet 88*. The soldiers were the most experienced in internal security in the PNGDF. By 1989, soldiers were tired of the grind of internal security duties. They had been used piecemeal, without the supervision of their officers, and penny-packeted around the country. Many of the bad habits of the police, especially the riot squads with whom the army formed a rapport on Bougainville, had been inculcated in the soldiers.

The PNGDF commitment to law and order operations left little time for regular or structured training. Soldiers not on operations were on leave[157] or deployed on border duties. Basic skills, especially tactics, weapon training and sub-unit drills, declined along with morale, discipline and unit standards — once proudly high. Funding shortages led to a deterioration in equipment, uniforms and weapons. Where weapon replacement trials were conducted, the process was painstakingly slow.[158] In 1986, three years before Bougainville, 1 RPIR received 100 M16 (5.56mm) rifles and several Ultimax (5.56mm) light machine guns (LMG), well short of the numbers of replacement weapons required to equip the

---

[157] Soldiers received 35 days paid leave per year together with free return travel to their home village once every two years.

[158] A trial carried out for a replacement light machine gun for sections dragged on for four years before the Ultimax 100 LMG was selected and issued.

battalion. Still, because law and order operations required one, or possibly two, companies at a time, equipment was pooled for soldiers being deployed. Little was left for the soldiers remaining in the barracks. Vehicles were similarly allocated. Radio deficiencies compounded the command problems in a unit which had deployed to the field at battalion level once in recent years, in 1986.[159]

Unit stores were therefore deficient, life-expired or unreliable. This affected unit efficiency and contributed to low morale and a lack of confidence within the ranks. The dismal state of affairs was well known at headquarters but sanctioned by neglect and experience in law and order operations in which the PNGDF faced little threat. Troops were overconfident in their ability to secure areas where a breakdown in law and order had occurred. They were more highly respected than the police but the 1989 pay riots had dented their image. Importantly, the troops had not participated in law and order operations as discrete army units. Internal security training in barracks bore little resemblance to operations.

Unit commanders had recognised the problems and some corrective action had been taken. A two-year training programme had been introduced in 1987 in 1 RPIR with regular reviews of unit efficiency. Command post exercises[160] were conducted to improve command and control through radio communications though radio deficiencies dogged the system. However, the programme was disrupted regularly. By 1988, sub-units were only capable of platoon-level work. In the six months before deployment to Bougainville, many of the unit officers were posted, further disrupting unit cohesion. By 1986, internal security training (aid to the civil power) made up 50 per cent of total unit training.[161] On Bougainville, operations were vastly different in character and intensity to previous law and order operations.

On Bougainville, troops operated on counter revolutionary warfare (CRW) lines — a concept inconsistent with aid to the civil power provisions in the PNG

---

[159] A battalion exercise was conducted at Kupiano/ Marshall Lagoon (Central Province) in 1986.
[160] Command post exercises test command and control procedures, and, except for headquarter staff, do not involve troops.
[161] In the 1970s, internal security training was 30 per cent of the unit training (Mench 1975: 117).

Constitution. As a result, the *Defence Act (1988)* was changed.[162] Conventional CRW[163] training had accounted for the other 50 per cent of the training time. Indeed, the soldiers had been well practised in CRW scenarios which were surprisingly similar to the Bougainville situation. Soldiers were familiar with patrolling and ambushing routine. This training had been conducted at section (ten men) level without radios and with little support. Why then did the battalion perform so badly on Bougainville?

Several reasons exist for the soldiers' poor performance. The soldiers were not natural bushmen as their fathers had been during the Second World War. Most were unable to live off the land. Some could not even recognise edible local fruits. Training had been centered on open vegetation in Central Province — a lack of funds and transport prevented exercises further afield.[164] The proximity of Taurama Barracks to the exercise area ensured a short supply line. In any event, exercises were only three weeks' duration so the logistic system was untested.

The terrain in Central Province offered good visibility, up to 200 metres or more at times. Soldiers were able to see the enemy at some distance, firing aimed shots with weapons superior to the other side. Good visibility also ensured navigation was simple. Soldiers who came from the province had local knowledge and a close rapport with the villagers. Life in the field posed few challenges. Leadership was not tested. The largely dry climatic conditions posed few difficulties for soldiers who were accustomed to a dry warm climate. Uniform needs for wet and cold weather were ignored in favour of basic field dress. Helmets and flak jackets were in short supply and restricted to internal security drills in an urban setting. These items were not used on CRW operations because of their weight and the need to reduce noise. Importantly, all exercise scenarios described a local population supportive of the PNGDF. That ensured military information was safeguarded and information on the enemy forthcoming.

---

[162] In aid to the civil power, a principle of minimum force is observed. Machine guns, mortars and grenade launchers are not carried on operations — Bougainville was to be an exception.
[163] The PNGDF terminology for CRW was counter insurgency operations (CIO).
[164] Some training was carried out on the Kokoda Trail when Australian aircraft were available.

The shortcomings in unit performance were not limited to the soldiers and logistics. Officers, especially at the junior level, had few of the skills necessary to command soldiers under difficult conditions in an operations area. For example, some new graduates of the Lae Defence Academy had never seen a platoon in defence. They therefore had little idea of the expanse of ground covered by a unit of that size or an understanding of the problems likely to be encountered in moving a group through primary jungle. These officers lacked confidence, especially in their ability to navigate in jungle away from larger formations.

So Bougainville came as a shock, the more so given that few civic action patrols had been conducted on Bougainville since independence. The last PNGDF patrol on Bougainville — Operation *Pitala Butunama* — was conducted in 1979 in Kieta and Buin (Defence Report 1979: 15). Maps were in short supply and out of date. Close vegetation and difficult terrain, often at high altitudes and with unusually high rainfall, made operations daunting. The 'Sepik swamps with their large mosquitos were a preferable option to the tactical nightmare presented by ... Bougainville [and] more hazardous than the PNG/ Indonesian border' (Liria 1993: 71-72). Even during the Second World War, Bougainville was `depressing and energy-sapping' (Sinclair 1990: 224). The close vegetation exaggerated the loneliness and created confusion. Regular rainfall helped mask the rebels' movement. Soldiers were required to return fire instinctively. Using a weapon in this manner requires practice, which was denied 1 RPIR before deployment. Even though ammunition was not in short supply, unit officers argued that there was no transport to convey troops to the range at Goldie River. In any case, soldiers had few occasions on law and order operations when they were required to fire their weapons.[165] Soldiers also found that the Bougainvillean rebels presented as a more serious threat than did the *raskols* encountered on earlier law and order operations.

---

[165] The only recorded incident occurred during LOMET 88 when a PNGDF sergeant fired in self defence after a joint police/PNGDF patrol was attacked by a tribal group.

The Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)

The first reports of sabotage against the mine were attributed to militant landowners. Later, they were more commonly referred to as militants. Early in 1989, the militant groups came to be known as *Rambos*. Liria (1993: 75) said that these *rambos* were so named `because they all acted in `Rambo' style against the security forces, and were inspired by the movies of the same name'. This was a popular misconception. *Rambo* was an acronym for the **R**evolutionary **Arm**y of **Bo**ugainville. Later, this was changed to the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.

The rebels posed a serious threat to the authority of government on Bougainville. Liria (1993: 78) describes the rebels well:

> The rebel, of very black skin colour, was physically a very fit person. He scouted the mountain ranges and those dreadful ridges with ease. He carried very little weight on his back. He would dash for safety through heavy undergrowth, down extremely steep slopes, which were almost cliffs. His hands and feet were tough, his strong physique made even tougher through the harshness of jungle life. He had little fear of the elements, and used them to his advantage at every opportunity. He was already an expert tracker and was fast becoming an expert in guerilla warfare. He easily found food and shelter ..., and rarely carried food. Above all, he knew the terrain extremely well. If he found himself in a new area, he took the most hazardous trail ... [making] it difficult for the security forces to follow, or to get in his way. They scorned us as those `redskin' killers who would pour so many rounds after a fleeing dog by mistake, and who ... preferred ridgelines, established tracks and creeklines.

Many Bougainvilleans (and a few *redskins*) who joined the ranks of the BRA, were probably given many incentives to do so. Some were motivated by secessionism, others by payback for security forces abuses, and others by the excitement. During the period 1989-90, armed militants probably numbered between 200 and 500 though modern weapons probably numbered less than fifty. The militant bands were spread across Bougainville but especially concentrated in

the south and central area of the island. Given their relatively small number, how could these groups stand against the PNGDF and inflict casualties?

The militants first armed themselves with shotguns and .22 rifles — common in many PNG villages and used for hunting. These weapons were especially effective in close quarter action where injuries could be inflicted. In time, the militants acquired by stealth and at the scene of clashes, security force weapons. The Second World War had also left a valuable legacy for the rebels. Arms dumps on the island still housed many weapons with ammunition available to those who knew their location. The Torokina area — scene of the allied landings in 1944 and a large allied base — was valuable in this regard.

Armed with this assortment of weapons, the rebels could choose the time and place of attack. The rebels would kill or wound and quickly withdraw. By the time the security forces carried out their drills and searched an area, the rebels were gone. The hit-and-run tactics slowed security force operations and frustrated its members who rarely saw the enemy. Rebels operated in small groups to avoid detection and capture, and to achieve surprise. Since they operated largely in their own areas, they could melt into the local population to escape.

The militia groups worked to a broad militant agenda of harassment, diverting the security forces when operations put pressure on an area. Militant activity had a disproportionate effect on PNGDF operations with small rebel groups forcing major deployments and long drawn out searches. These tactics tied down large numbers of security force personnel. Because of rebel successes, the PNGDF stopped operating in small groups, opting instead for company-size deployments. That process explains how increasing numbers of PNGDF made little difference to the deteriorating security situation on Bougainville.

If members of the loose militant coalitions, including local leaders, were caught or killed, the militant effort was not seriously jeopardised. Little intelligence was available on other groups or on the location of militant leaders. That explains why the military effort on Bougainville failed to complete an intelligence picture, which could usefully be used for operations. As a result, no key rebel leaders were killed by the PNGDF in the period up to 1990.

Later, after the security force withdrawal in March 1990, the BRA ranks swelled with new recruits. Some were inspired by BRA successes while others were encouraged by the opportunity for criminal gain. These new recruits have often been referred to by the hardcore rebels as '*seconhan* (second hand) BRA' (Layton 1992: 308). Many, especially the criminal elements, did much to undermine the potential gains of the Bougainvilleans. Armed and accountable to no one, they preyed on local people such as those with whom there were tribal feuds, killing and raping at will. As a result, the BRA alienated itself from the populace, which had supported the militants during their campaign. In the wake of the security force withdrawal, Bougainvilleans were unable to establish even a rudimentary administrative framework. Within several months, Buka people who had been spared the worst of security force excesses, formed a resistance force and invited the PNGDF back.

During 1989/90, Sam Kauona, a former PNGDF lieutenant, gave the rebels a decided advantage. Kauona joined the militants after security forces killed a relative. Whatever Kauona's motive, he proved to be an important addition. During 1989, when the militants were targetting the mine, Kauona's knowledge of explosives was put to good use. Still, not all damage was Kauona's handiwork. Even before he returned to Bougainville in March 1989, militant landowners were destroying pylons and mine buildings. The expertise for these attacks came from the many Bougainvilleans employed at Panguna in explosive work. They also knew of the valuable explosive stocks held both at the Panguna mine and at the Manetai limestone quarry; both were early militant targets.

Human Rights

The abuse of human rights on Bougainville was occurring long before the PNGDF deployed there in March 1989. The police, especially the mobile squads, had applied their highlands-style treatment of the people in areas of unrest. The police made no distinction between Bougainvilleans and highlanders. The PNGDF was already familiar with police tactics, having observed first hand their treatment of civilians during operations *Green Beret 87* and *LOMET 88*. Against that background, the PNGDF assumed the police role after they arrived.

Some soldiers were rough-house types drawn from the *raskol* gangs of the major cities. Others made themselves popular within army units by demonstrations of abuse as a means of cementing their position in the group. Still others did not oppose the abuses for fear of alienating themselves. Subordinates misinterpreted the hardline action demanded by some officers to mean physical abuse of the local population. In some cases, the abuse arose from frustration in fighting an elusive enemy. The killing of close friends motivated other soldiers. For all these reasons and others, abuses occurred on Bougainville. Where these occurred in the early days of the deployment and the perpetrators escaped disciplinary action — as many did — a pattern of abuse was established which quickly became widespread. Still, at no time was the abuse of human rights government or PNGDF policy.

Beatings and the destruction of civilian property became an outlet for frustrated soldiers. Peer pressure also played a role. Officers, even those who opposed such activity, did not intervene. Some (like Liria) feared troops would react against them as observed at Aropa when Colonel Dotaona stopped a beating. Younger officers wanted acceptance by the soldiers and so tacitly supported them. Police did not intervene because they too were complicit. In any event, command of the SOE on the ground rested with a PNGDF commander. Even when provincial government voices were raised in protest, they were ignored by Port Moresby, especially by past commander-turned-politician, Ted Diro.

So the pattern of abuse continued, even in the urban areas. Checkpoints set up by the PNGDF were sites of harassment. Young men were beaten or forced to lie on the hot bitumen for hours in the sun. Women were molested under the thinly-veiled guise of searches for weapons. Villages were burnt as a form of punishment and in retaliation for ambushes or simply on suspicion of harbouring rebels. Soldiers believed that all Bougainvilleans should be made to suffer for the actions of those few militants in the bush in the flawed belief that Bougainvilleans would turn against the rebels in favour of the government. The defence atrocities `fed the ranks of the BRA' (Forster 1992: 369). No special

effort was made to enlist local support using a hearts and minds campaign until the troops returned to Bougainville in late 1990.

Contrary to popular belief, the human rights abuses perpetrated by the PNGDF were not simply the result of frustration and rising casualties in the Bougainville rebellion, though these contributed to the problem. The seeds of indiscipline had been sown during earlier law and order operations. The human rights record of the PNGDF on Bougainville is a sad one, the more so given that the soldiers acted against those whom they had sworn to protect. Furthermore, their action showed to an international audience the force's poor record of professional conduct. Even more damning is the absence of prompt action by the PNG government against soldiers for these abuses.

The abuses on Bougainville have been the subject of investigations by the United Nations and Amnesty International. Their full extent may never be known. Some accusations are so horrific that there is a natural tendency to dismiss them as propaganda. Amnesty International (1990 and 1993) has given an account of abuses during the periods 1989-90 and 1991-93. Publicity has been given to the Minatong[166] case (December 1989) and the St Valentine's Day massacre (February 1990) (Figure 7.7). In the latter case, Colonel Nuia corroborated eyewitness accounts in an interview with *Four Corners* in May 1991. At the time of the interview, Nuia was commanding a force on Bougainville, which was still committing abuses.[167]

---

[166] The assault and subsequent death in police custody of Aloysius Minatong in December 1989 is described in Spriggs and Denoon 1991: 174. The soldiers shown in the photographs of the victim are members of the PNGDF Engineer Battalion. No disciplinary action has ever been taken against those members of the security forces involved in the incident.

[167] The conduct of the PNGDF in the massacre was verified by eyewitnesses — including soldiers of the PNGDF contingent — interviewed during my visit to Buka and Bougainville in May 1991.

Figure 7.7

St Valentine's Day Massacre

On 13 February 1990, after a rebel attack on a platoon of Golf Company on 12 February (*Battle of Buka*), soldiers were despatched north from Arawa by vehicle to intercept rebels withdrawing south from Buka Island. Colonel Nuia reasoned that the rebels would follow the main north-south road. The PNGDF enjoyed local support in North Bougainville at that time. Facing a low threat, Nuia decided to move troops by vehicle to cut off the rebels. The plan worked and a large contact occurred near Tinputz. Soldiers later arrested seven (unarmed) Bougainvilleans, suspected of being rebels, and flew them by helicopter to Arawa. Eyewitness accounts confirm that the Bougainvilleans were beaten and hospitalised. Later, soldiers[168] took them away and shot six — a seventh escaped. The bodies were disposed of by helicopter at sea. Those killed were: Ranmo Benito, Siru Lebatavi; Lazarus Gemon; Joe Sirabea; Allan Mateari; and Moiva Sibanai.

Those soldiers who are guilty of human rights abuses are widely known within the PNGDF. Still, no action can be taken against them because of the 1994 amnesty granted to members of the security forces (and the rebels). Bougainvilleans who know of atrocities now have little recourse in seeking justice on behalf of the victims. The amnesty decision and inaction on the government's part in the years before that decision are a travesty of justice. The deliberate abuse of Bougainvilleans by groups of armed soldiers is also an abuse of power. Such conduct sets aside a professional army from armed thugs. Why then did the government fail to take action against the security forces?

Prime Minister Namaliu was well aware of the extent of the human rights abuses occurring on Bougainville in 1989. He contemplated action but found that there were widely divergent views about the atrocities, and the action which should be taken. Diro, then deputy prime minister, argued that the abuses were inevitable and unavoidable. Momis and others believed that an independent tribunal was required. There was no consensus within government on the way

---

[168] The soldiers were led by an officer from the PNGDF Engineer Battalion.

ahead. The government was also conscious that the PNGDF was suffering poor morale, the ex-servicemen's pay issue was unresolved, and the pay riots of February 1989 were still a vivid memory. Fearing a backlash if action were taken against the PNGDF, and facing a shaky coalition, Namaliu was left little room for manoeuvre. In the event, he did nothing and the security forces continued systematic abuses.

Withdrawal

'the history of counter-guerilla warfare points to bitter and protracted campaigns in which superior morale often conquers superior material' (Mench 1975: 119).

The PNGDF withdrew from Bougainville by 12 March 1990; the withdrawal represented an ignominious defeat by a rag-tag guerilla army of less than 500. Ironically, the PNGDF had been shamed by its own people and not by some external aggressor. That same week represented the fiftieth anniversary of the raising of an indigenous battalion (June 1940), the Pacific Islands Regiment, and a medal was later issued to commemorate the event. However, Port Moresby's view of the PNGDF may be reflected in the fact that no campaign medal, conspicuous service medal or honours have been awarded to the PNGDF for Bougainville service.

Political/ Military Relations

'Political decisions and policies were not made on the basis of solving the crisis [they were] becoming a playground for party politicking and power play' (Liria 1993: 139).

Port Moresby's failure to assert its authority on Bougainville and to prevent landowner unrest escalating into a full-blown secessionist struggle cannot easily be attributed to a few key mistakes. Problems existed at the political level and on the ground. In the beginning and often throughout the crisis, politicians and senior departmental officials, including the PNGDF Commander, failed to recognise warning signs in the unrest on Bougainville, which were threatening the mine operations and, eventually, the PNG economy. The problem was compounded by the ill-considered response taken by the police mobile squads (Operation *Tampara*) which failed to modify their methods to take account of the

nature of the situation on Bougainville. In this, the police rank and file and their commanders in Port Moresby must share the blame.

Port Moresby's decision to send the PNGDF to Bougainville (Operation *Blue Print*) was based on the government's belief that there, as in earlier law and order crises, the PNGDF would make the difference. The government's confidence was shared by the PNGDF. In the past, its mere presence had been sufficient to tip the balance in the government's favour and see its authority demonstrably restored.

Excessive confidence among the soldiers undermined their effectiveness on the ground. Soldiers failed to follow drills and to remain alert. Rebel successes would, ultimately, leave the soldiers and their officers demoralised. Early over-confidence, however, only partially explains the PNGDF's poor performance on Bougainville. Analysis points also to inadequate training, weak leadership and poor equipment. The PNGDF was vulnerable from the beginning, especially against a committed foe.

In spite of the PNGDF command and logistic weaknesses, military vulnerabilities could have been overcome. Military objectives were often uncertain, confused by inconsistent policy and blurred divisions of responsibility, even after the declaration of a state of emergency. Uncertainty and frustration assumed broader dimensions in the wake of rebel successes and resulting security force casualties. In that climate, soldiers were quick to apportion blame for their failings in the field — in some cases justifiably — to the national government.

The tasks allotted to the PNGDF — protection of the mine, clearance of the PMAR and the destruction of the rebel army — were beyond their capacity; the more so given the unrealistic timeframes set down for operations which ignored the terrain and the rebel threat. Operations on Bougainville against a confident and mobile rebel force are inherently demanding in time and resources.

On the ground, the contingent was shored up by BCL's willingness to underwrite its rationing and logistic requirements. However, once the soldiers deployed beyond the mine, logistic weaknesses were exposed. On occasions, the contingent's inability to resupply forward elements constrained operations to

several weeks. Command and control problems were overlooked in spite of the difficult terrain and inadequacies of the PNGDF radios. Flexibility in manoeuvre and follow-up was lost. Compromises reduced the PNGDF threat to rebel activities. Committed operations over extended periods of time, even by small elements of the PNGDF, were rare. Operational plans were often leaked to the rebels even before the PNGDF deployed. Army activity became predictable and knowledge of its logistic weaknesses and of the troops' lack of enthusiasm encouraged the rebels. Against that background, the rebels operated almost with impunity. Success invariably eluded the PNGDF along with opportunities to bolster confidence.

Government criticism of the PNGDF further alienated the troops and added to tensions. Mistrust and suspicion prevailed with a two-fold effect:

- soldiers attributed their failure to poor government policy, lack of resources, and insufficient recognition of their problems; and
- the government, faced with an intractable problem on Bougainville, was uncertain of its approach and unwilling to compromise on its opposition to secession.

The litany of setbacks on Bougainville arose for reasons which extended beyond the absence of any judicious use of the PNGDF. Military operations were routinely compromised by an eagerness to pursue peace, even at the risk of undermining Port Moresby's military muscle. In time, the PNGDF would play a spoiler role in settlement prospects as a spiteful response to the government's handling of the issue. On those occasions, the government trod cautiously in dealing with the PNGDF, mindful that only months before, in February 1989, soldiers had marched on Parliament.

The government seemed to ignore the complexity of the problem, which underscored its intractability. Bougainville simply did not lend itself to easy solutions yet compromise was resisted. Government consensus on the way ahead was elusive. Indeed, `divisions between the hawks and the doves within the national government and differences among Bougainvilleans made negotiations difficult' (May 1996: 3). Even among government agencies, cohesion was

lacking, and co-operative effort on the ground was inhibited by suspicion and jealously.

The PNGDF, which bore the brunt of the casualties in the conflict, and now commanded the security forces on the ground, felt the army should be given a free hand. The soldiers particularly resented the need to consult and inform the provincial government, which was suspected of working with the rebels. Indeed, it was widely known that Premier Kabui was related to Francis Ona and to the rebel agent in Honiara, Martin Miriori.[169] The ground troops also criticised their military leadership. Those in Port Moresby would not give them adequate support and those in command on the ground were often absent in town.

The soldiers found especially provocative Port Moresby's apparent willingness to accommodate the militants. When the soldiers moved into rebel areas, rebel leaders would sue for negotiations, insisting on an army withdrawal as a precondition. Soldiers felt they were being sold out. Lives were being risked only to hand the initiative back to the militants. Over time, the soldiers became convinced that the reason for their failure to best the rebels was Port Moresby's stance, and a lack of money and equipment.

When, in response to the challenge to its authority on Bougainville, the government authorised PNGDF involvement, no clear objectives were set. As hostilities intensified, the government again failed to evaluate the situation, especially the potential risks of escalation. Indeed, Port Moresby simply looked for a bigger stick. For his part, the PNGDF Commander failed to counsel the government on the difficulties presented by operations on Bougainville and, importantly, the very slim chances of success countering a guerilla threat, especially given the terrain and limited resources. As well, the cost of escalation was not spelt out in spite of the ongoing overspending in the defence budget; rather there was a tendency to see cost only in terms of lost mining revenue, which skewed the necessity for military action.

---

[169] Martin Miriori was, a few years later, assisted by the Australian government to escape from Honiara to Europe, following several failed attempts, allegedly by the PNG government, to assassinate the rebel agent (Author's experience as part of the evacuation planning team).

The appointment of a military officer to oversee operations on Bougainville may have been done with the best intentions. However, the PNGDF was given no incentive to act in a subordinate role. The appointment of the Police Commissioner as Controller was a constitutional charade dressed up to assure Parliament and the people that the defence force was acting in assisting the civil power. The truth of the matter was that Port Moresby had few ideas of how to deal with the rebellion.

Implicit in Port Moresby's preparedness to negotiate was the realisation that a peaceful settlement was the only solution. Yet the government did not translate that into a coherent policy or co-ordinate departmental efforts toward achieving that goal. As a result, there was confusion on the ground and in Port Moresby with people working at crossed purposes.

The PNGDF, and especially 1 RPIR, which deployed first to Bougainville, did not develop a strategic plan to prepare for its increasing use in internal security. No account was reflected in annual training objectives issued by the Commander or his subordinate commanders. Rather, there was a tendency to perpetuate established internal security drills which failed to take account of the alternative ways troops were being used between 1984 and 1988. Indeed, soldiers had not been required to use drills practised since independence in the internal security operations since 1984. The units also failed to translate skills in counter-insurgency operations, practised as late as 1988, into action on Bougainville.

The PNGDF was further disadvantaged by its unfamiliarity with the province. The abandonment of civic action patrols on Bougainville after 1979 not only limited knowledge of conditions; absent also were the important army-civilian links established during these patrols. The army was foreign to most Bougainvilleans. That situation ensured poor intelligence and a natural alienation from the civil populace. To compound the PNGDF's problems, rivalry existed between the National Intelligence Organisation and the Defence Intelligence Branch. Potential benefits derived from combining their efforts were lost.

Many of these problems may well have been minimised in their effect on the performance of the PNGDF if the basic standards of discipline, leadership and

fieldcraft had been sound. However this was not the case. Soldiers were unprepared physically and mentally for the demands of sustained operations. That was reflected in their lack of self-confidence and the lack of confidence in their leadership. The soldiers lacked competent navigation skills, relying on main roads and villages as checkpoints. Sub-units could not effectively be controlled below company level due to radio deficiencies and poor operator knowledge.

On operations, PNGDF field commanders often committed every available sub-unit with scant regard for the capacity of the logistic system. Even when this became painfully obvious, the solution was to limit the duration of the activity rather than to sustain a lower presence in the field. That process also prevented troops being rotated in the field, maintaining pressure on the rebels. As a result of the total commitment, no reserve was constituted nor a reliable method for deployment maintained. This severely limited the field commander's capacity to respond to rebel threats outside the immediate area of operations.

Bougainville challenged the PNGDF. Welcomed by the local people tired of police brutality, the PNGDF had the opportunity initially to take stock of the situation and to identify its limitations on Bougainville. That assessment should have formed the basis for a comprehensive briefing to the government on the capacity of the PNGDF to deal with the unrest. In the meantime, the PNGDF could focus on mine security. A co-ordinated and professional approach to its role may have minimised the risk of escalation and facilitated a framework for some form of settlement. Indeed, military officers should first have recognised that the fragile situation could not be allowed to escalate. An insurgency there was simply beyond army resources. Given its limitations — few personnel, lack of mobility and poor logistics — the PNGDF needed to concentrate on judiciously allocating its force.

Instead, threats to the rebels and operations in their heartland proved too provocative for a militancy driven by the desire for compensation and secession. The PNGDF's hard-line suggested to the government that if the talks failed, it had a strong stick in the form of the PNGDF. Independent assessments would have shown that Bougainville's problem did not lend itself to a military solution and

urged caution. At the least, the government should have given due recognition to the cost of the deployment — even in 1989 a considerable drain on the government coffers.

Government/ PNGDF Relations

The intractability of the Bougainville conflict strained relations between all levels of government, especially between political leaders and the PNGDF. Port Moresby recognised that the PNGDF played a pivotal role on Bougainville, even if its activities, at times, threatened peace prospects. The full implications of the PNGDF's role in its relations with government could not be fully assessed while the conflict continued to defy a settlement. However, a marked weakening in the army's accountability to government and an erosion of the army's subordination to the civil authority, was evident in the early stages of the crisis.

The army has been prepared to use collective force or the threat of it to gain its objectives — expansion, equipment and pay increases. Government has been challenged on more than one occasion. The PNGDF has embarrassed the government internationally over its abuse of power. Further weakening of the PNGDF leadership has raised questions over the army's loyalty and the extent of control exercised by the commander and his officers over the rank and file. The government has also noted with concern the stronger links between the PNGDF and the police as a result of their shared experience on Bougainville.

Port Moresby's problems with its army will not be resolved with a Bougainville settlement. Indeed, all the indications suggest that law and order problems will demand more of the army's attention. So the government needs to handle the PNGDF deftly, always uncertain of its dependability.

The Bougainville Experience - PNGDF

The Bougainville experience underscored, for the PNGDF, the importance of basic professional skills and values — a high standard of training, leadership and resources. The lack of a decisive victory over the rebels in 1989/90 left a force demoralised and divided by interference from a government anxious for military success. The PNGDF paid a high price for its involvement on Bougainville in 1989/90. Fourteen soldiers were killed and many more wounded.

In large part, the casualties resulted from poor leadership, inadequate training and indiscipline.

Figure 7.8

PNGDF Killed- Bougainville 1989-90

	1989	
6 April	2 Lieutenant Stephen Yandu	East Sepik
	Private Lomas Jaruga	Oro
5 May	Private John Buka	Manus
17 August	Private George Mena	E/New Britain (Friendly Fire)
11 September	Private Simon Ou'u	Gulf (Car Accident)
18 September	Private Francis Wasali	E/Sepik (Explosive Accident)
2 October	Lance Corporal John Mu'uh	Manus (Explosive Accident)
23 November	Private Boni Gau	Morobe
	1990	
4 February	Private Simon Gabitu	Western Province
12 February	Private Mark Barin	Madang
	Private Allan Miria	Central
	Private Maino Lakasis	Central
	Private Mano Taguna	Sth Highlands
14 February	Corporal Jack Haladei	Milne Bay

The PNGDF was riddled with indiscipline. PNGDF leadership was so weakened that soldiers rely on force to achieve results. Such action is not confined to Bougainville. Soldiers have also been prepared to act against the government if necessary. In spite of these problems, Bougainville has strengthened the hand of the PNGDF. The Force was important as an instrument of state in aid to the civil power and the precedent of appointing a military commander to oversee civil operations has exaggerated that role.

Implications for Australia

The Bougainville problem which emerged in 1989/90 posed difficulties for Australia. The legacy of its colonial administration and Australia's investment interest in the Panguna mine necessitated caution. On the former, Australia has long been conscious of the need to be seen to protect PNG sovereignty. On the latter, Australia recognised that Australian investment elsewhere in PNG could be jeopardised unless the Bougainville issue was handled with care. For those who understood the background to the rebellion, there was also an acknowledgment of Australia's part in Bougainvilleans' sense of injustice.

Early policy established that Bougainville was a PNG problem; Australia supported the view that PNG's territorial integrity had to be protected and Australia stood willing to become engaged in mutually agreed ways (Spriggs and Denoon 1992: 146-151). Consideration had been given to the use of the ADF during the Bougainville crisis but the option was dismissed because of the potential domestic problems in becoming too involved, and especially in assuming a key role.[170] However, Australia's concerns ignored PNG and wider regional expectations that Australia, as a major regional player, had the credentials and historical connections which justified its involvement. Indeed, Australia faced little opposition in the region to any involvement on Bougainville, including from Indonesia, which feared any spread of instability in PNG.

Australia had already faced a dilemma over Bougainville in 1975 in the run-up to PNG's independence. Australia insisted that PNG should come to independence as one country. That decision was undoubtedly influenced by the importance of the Panguna mine and by the apparent absence of widespread support on Bougainville for secession. In 1988/89, as tension increased on Bougainville, Australia was first concerned with the safety of its citizens and the protection of its investments. Once the mine closed (15 May 1989) and the Australians left, Canberra turned its attention to the implications of Bougainville for PNG unity and stability. A complicating factor in Australia's position over Bougainville was the bilateral defence relationship.

---

[170] Author's experience as the PNG Desk Officer in DIO 1989-90.

Australia's husbanding of the PNGDF since independence established close links through training and logistic arrangements. (The 1987 Joint Declaration of Principles had no ramifications given that Bougainville was an internal matter for PNG.) Australia was prepared to continue its support for the PNGDF so long as that support was not exclusively for Bougainville operations. Australia's conditional stance was made more essential given the PNGDF's abuse of human rights. The need to insulate Australia against any charges of complicity in the PNGDF actions influenced the decision to impose conditions on the four Iroquois helicopters. However, Australia's stance invited criticism from the PNGDF with many questioning Australia's reliability as a defence partner and its motives. Bougainville had wider implications for Australia.

Sensitive to its role as a colonial administrator and to its hard-line approach in establishing the Panguna mine, Canberra recognised the `weight of historical baggage' (Spriggs and Denoon 1992: 149) which limited Australia's capacity to become involved. However, in supporting PNG Australia had not shirked its international responsibilities. Security force abuses have been condemned and Canberra has used its influence to defuse tensions between PNG and the Solomon Islands arising from the spillover effects of incursions into Solomons' territory.[171]

Conclusion

> *'Bougainville has focussed attention on a range of endemic problems that successive governments have pushed aside'* (Fraser 1989: 34).

On the scale of world conflicts, Bougainville barely rates a mention. In casualties alone during 1989/90 fewer than 1000 people died — 14 of whom were PNGDF servicemen. In spite of the regional spillover effects, PNG's problems on Bougainville have been bearable internationally. Indeed, few concessions have been forced on PNG through foreign pressure. In that light, the failure of the militant leadership to attract international support for its UDI can be understood.

---

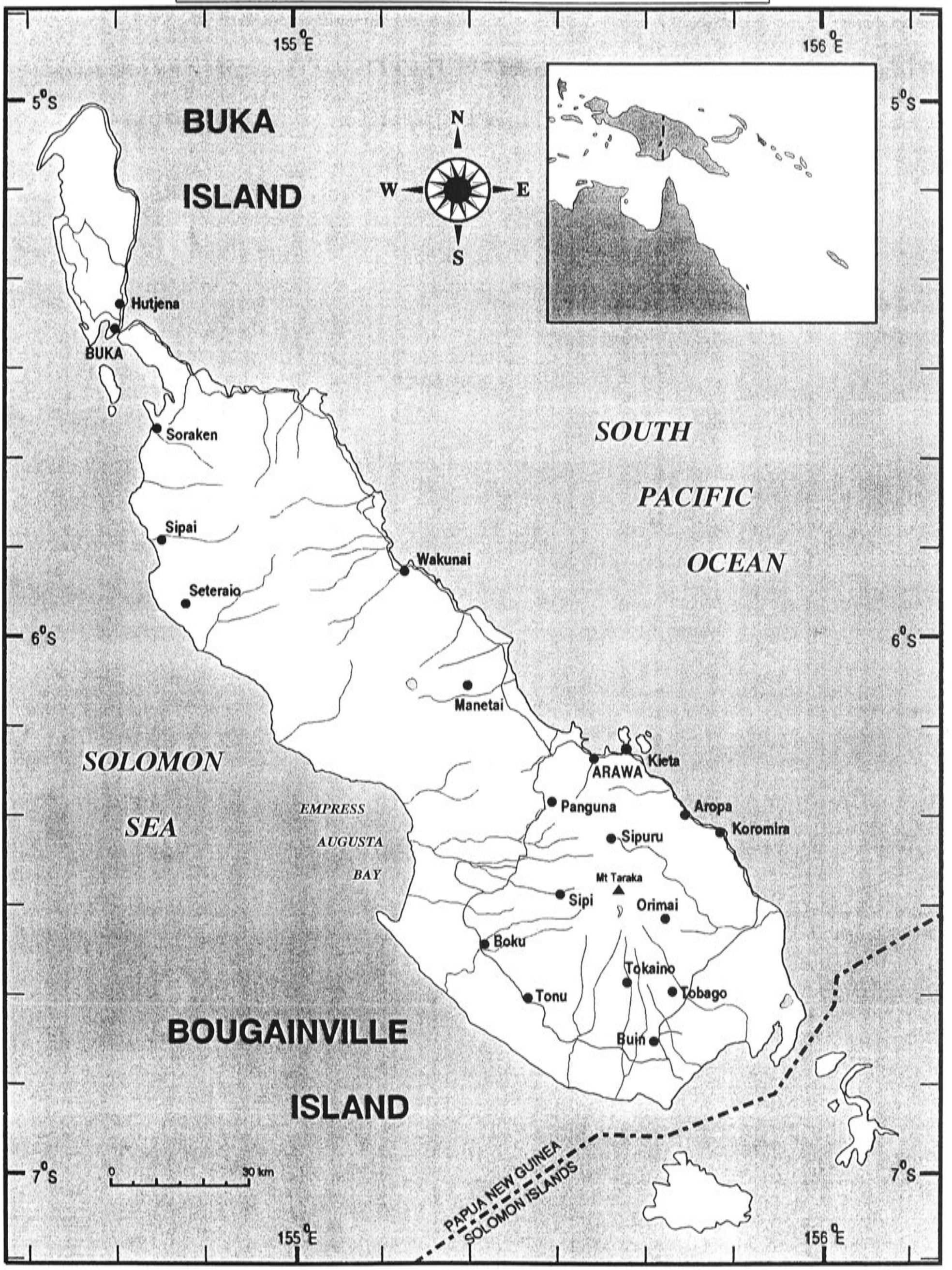
[171] The PNGDF did not violate Solomon Islands sovereignty until 1991, which is outside the period covered by the thesis.

For PNG, the political and economic costs have been contained. The importance of the Panguna mine has diminished with the commencement of production from several large mines elsewhere in the country. The government was not undermined by the policy failures on Bougainville. Law and order problems elsewhere in the country did not threaten the stability of the state, in spite of the size of the security force commitment on Bougainville.

If the PNGDF had been in a state of decline before 1989, Bougainville accelerated its demise. Fractures in the army's professionalism, discipline, leadership and loyalty gave way under the strain of Bougainville. Under domestic and international scrutiny, the PNGDF failed to restore normalcy and Port Moresby's control. On occasions, the PNGDF undermined government policy. Yet PNGDF failures on Bougainville show the accumulation of years of neglect, including a willingness by successive governments to overlook infractions. Together, these have delivered a force which cannot uphold government authority. Indeed, neglect has established a coterie of groups of questionable loyalty, which threaten the government in power and, beyond that, the democracy of the state. Moreover, PNGDF indiscipline in the period 1980–1990 created a force which is unpredictable, lacking military order and strong leadership. Individual members were driven by agendas dictated by wantoks, politicians, criminal interests and survival — a dangerous brew of influences.

****

BOUGAINVILLE



BOUGAINVILLE 1989/90
OPERATION NAKMAI MAIMAI (3-6 JULY 1989)

155°27' E
155°35' E
6°10' S
6°22' S

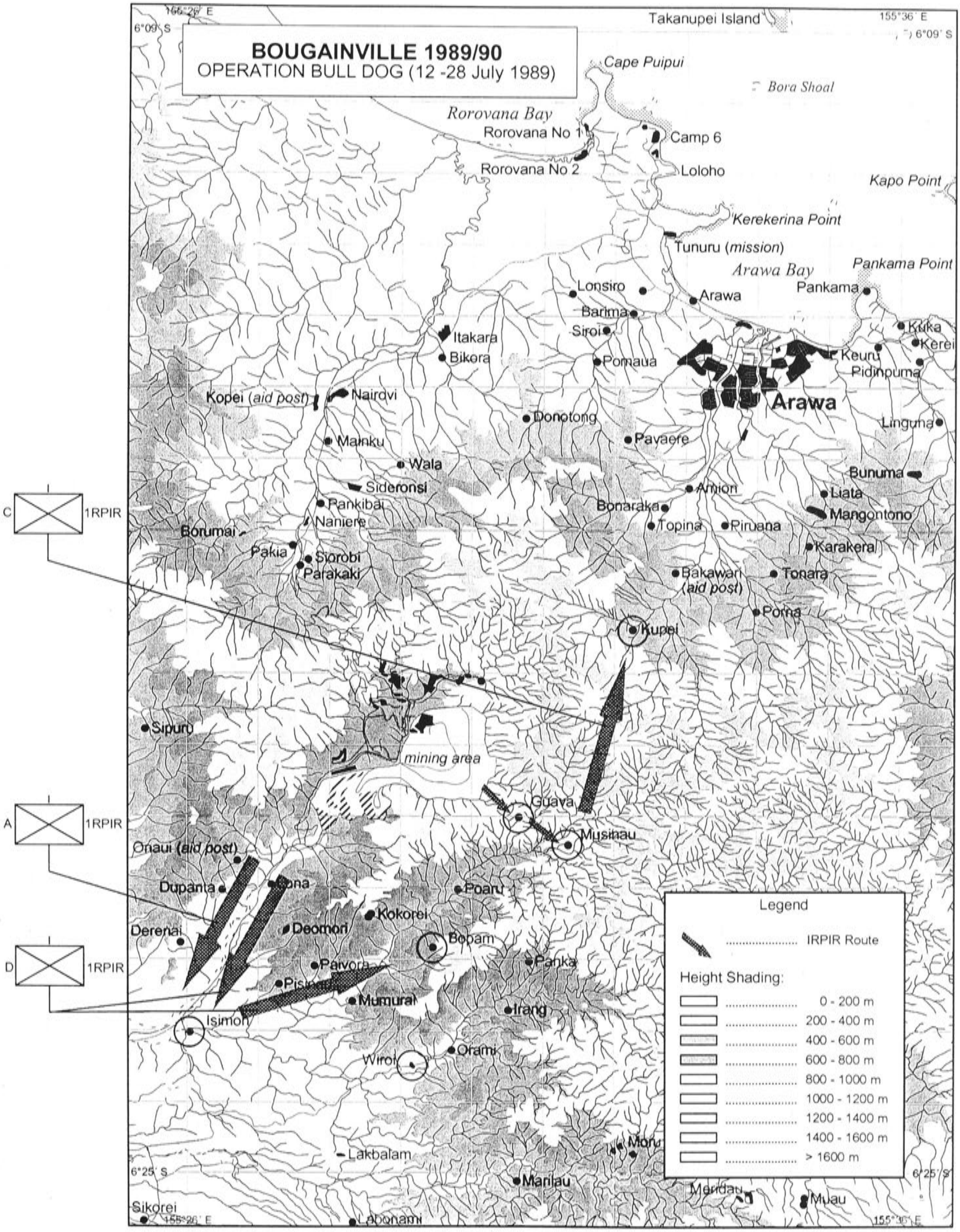
Cape Puipui
Bora Shoal
Rorovava No 1
Rorovava No 2
Camp 6
Loloho
Kerekerina Point
Tununu (mission)
Arawa Bay
Lonsiro
Barima
Arawa
Pankama
Sirol
Itakara
Bikora
Pomaua
Keuru
Arawa
Nairovi
A 1RPIR
Donotong
Payaere
Mainku
Wala
Sideronsi
Amion
Liata
Mangontono
Naniere
Pankibai
Bonaraka
Topina
Piruana
Karakera
Pakia
Siorobi
Parakake
MOUNT NEGRO HEAD
Bakawari (aid post)
Tonara
Porna
Kupei
MOUNT KUPARA
mining area
drain
Guava
Musinau
Iuna
Poaru
Kokorei
Deomori
Bopam
Paivora
Panka
Pisinau
Mumurai
Irang
Sipuru (aid post)

Legend

..... A/1RPIR Route

Height Shading:

..... 0 - 200 m
..... 200 - 400 m
..... 400 - 600 m
..... 600 - 800 m
..... 800 - 1000 m
..... 1000 - 1200 m
..... 1200 - 1400 m
..... 1400 - 1600 m
..... > 1600 m


BOUGAINVILLE 1989/90
OPERATION BULL DOG (12 -28 July 1989)
166°26' E
6°09' S
155°36' E
Takanupei Island
Cape Puipui
Bora Shoal
Rorovana Bay
Rorovana No 1
Rorovana No 2
Camp 6
Loloho
Kapo Point
Kerekerina Point
Tununu (mission)
Arawa Bay
Pankama Point
Pankama
Lonsiro
Arawa
Barima
Siroi
Kuka
Kerei
Keuru
Pidinpuma
Itakara
Bikora
Pomaua
Arawa
Kopei (aid post)
Nairovi
Donotong
Linguna
Pavaere
Mainku
Wala
Bunuma
Sideronsi
Amion
Liata
Pankibai
Bonaraka
Mangontono
Naniere
Borumai
Topina
Piruana
Karakera
Pakia
Siorobi
Parakaki
Bakawari (aid post)
Tonara
Poma
Kupei
Sipuru
mining area
Guava
Musinau
Onaui (aid post)
Dupanta
Poaru
Kokorei
Derenai
Deomori
Bopam
Panka
Paivora
Pisinau
Mumural
Irang
Isimon
Orami
Wirol
Lakbalam
Moru
Marilau
Meridau
Muau
Sikorei
Labonami
6°25' S
155°26' E
155°36' E
C 1RPIR
A 1RPIR
D 1RPIR
Legend
IRPIR Route
Height Shading:
0 - 200 m
200 - 400 m
400 - 600 m
600 - 800 m
800 - 1000 m
1000 - 1200 m
1200 - 1400 m
1400 - 1600 m
> 1600 m

BOUGAINVILLE 1989/90
OPERATION KISIM DOG (4-28 AUGUST 1989)

155°32' E
155°44' E
6°17' S
6°25' S

Karakera
Bonamung
Bakawari (aid post)
Kupei
Taurarku Point
Kohapi
Bawareboine Island
Kokodei
Bakatung
Kieta (Aropa) Airport
Rumba (*aid post*)
Siromba
Bougainville Lumber Sawmill
Daratui
Unabato
Moinam
Tanaboia
Aropa
Musinau
Nassioi (*aid post*)
Abaru
Kurai
Roreinang
Morangasina (*aid post*)
Karuru
Aruri
Wida
Sipuru (*aid post*)
Kuritave
Dembiwei
Damuna
Damu
Meridau No2
Moru
Meridau
Muau

B 1RPIR
A 1RPIR
D 1RPIR

Legend

wind break

Height Shading:

0 - 200 m
200 - 400 m
400 - 600 m
600 - 800 m
800 - 1000 m
1000 - 1200 m
1200 - 1400 m
1400 - 1600 m
> 1600 m

BOUGAINVILLE 1989/90

OPERATION FOOT LOOSE (11 JANUARY-2 MARCH 1990)

155°32´ E
155°44´ E
6°17´ S
6°25´ S

Karakera
Bonamung
Bakawari (aid post)
Kupei
Taurarku Point
Kohapi
Bawareboine Island
Kokodei
Bakatung
Rumba (*aid post*)
Kieta (Aropa) Airport
Siromba
Bougainville Lumber Sawmill
Daratui
Urabato
Moinam
Tanaboia
Aropa
Musinau
Nassloi (*aid post*)
Abaru
Kurai
Roreinang
Karuru
Morangasina (*aid post*)
Aruri
Wida
Sipuru (*aid post*)
Kurtiave
Dembiwei
Damu
Damuna
Meridau No2
Moru
Meridau
Muau

Legend

wind break

Height Shading:

0 - 200 m
200 - 400 m
400 - 600 m
600 - 800 m
800 - 1000 m
1000 - 1200 m
1200 - 1400 m
1400 - 1600 m
> 1600 m

Chapter 8

Coup d'état

`a coup ... depend[s] on the degree of co-operation between the PNGDF and the Police ... cohesion amongst the officers of both [and] the assistance of the PNG bureaucracy' (Mench 1975: 188).

At first glance, PNG has come through testing times. Democracy prevails, despite economic and political challenges, and, notwithstanding its turbulent history, the PNGDF has remained in barracks. However, this assessment belies the fragile nature of the PNG state and downplays the potential for events to combine to unravel the country's political institutions, creating the conditions for a coup.

A PNGDF coup has been the subject of speculation since before independence. The ingredients for military action against the PNG state have existed for some time (See Turner 1990; MacQueen 1993; May 1998). Comfort cannot be taken in PNG's twenty-six years of democratic government. Coups can come many years after independence and after years of stable government (May et al. 1998: 20). The Fiji coups in 1987 are a case in point.

Prior to independence, PNG's political leaders were careful to establish a military structure separate from the political apparatus of the state (See Chapter 2). Many believed that under the Constitutional arrangements put in place at independence, coups could be prevented (Turner 1990: 118). According to Janowitz (1964: 212), however, `even under civilian control of the military, the danger of military intervention is not removed'. In any event, the PNG government undermined the effectiveness of those safeguards by using the army in internal security from 1984. That decision coincided with a decline in PNGDF professionalism.

Mench (1975: 188) believed that a coup was difficult in PNG without the cooperation of the police and the public service, though he conceded that `support [from the police and the public service was] invariably ... forthcoming in the African experience' (ibid.: 208). He believed that PNG's geography and the relatively small size of the army meant that a coup could not be successful.

MacQueen (1993: 138) agreed that PNG's topography (as well as ethnicity, military capability, and institutional rivalry) `militate against the achievement of a successful coup'. Others argue that the PNGDF is too small to conduct a coup. Yet the African experience shows that the possibility of a coup is not reduced by limiting the size of the army — an army of 250 in Togo in January 1963 carried out a coup (Morrison et al. 1989: 160). Janowitz (1964: 209) also noted that a coup requires `only a small cabal of politically motivated officers'. We should bear in mind also that coups do not need expensive weaponry or complicated strategic planning: `a handful of men can wreak tremendous damage' (Lee 1969: 164). Finer (1988: 225) too believed that the size of the armed force bore no relationship to the failure or success of a coup. MacQueen (1993: 138) held the view that `it would be unwise to dismiss ... some kind of serious military intervention'; he believed the real issue was whether a coup would be successful.

As the demise of the PNGDF — through indiscipline, inadequate training and equipment, poor leadership and financial problems — became more evident during the 1980s, the PNGDF's poor state of professionalism was exposed. MacQueen (1993: 137) suggested one benefit of the PNGDF's predicament was that the army `failed to make itself an alternative to state authority'. However, that assumes that the army, among its motives for a coup, would seek to govern PNG. Sceptics of the PNGDF's coup potential argue that the problems besetting the Force rule out a coup attempt. However, problems in the PNGDF chain of command prevent control by the army hierarchy over the rank and file, making a coup possible.

Officers in the Force have shown in discussions with the author an awareness of the difficulties in mounting a coup but they hold a firm belief that a coup is possible in PNG. Topography, they argue, gives the PNGDF, with its limited size, the advantage. Troops would secure key points around the capital, and in Lae and Wewak, well before intervention by police mobile squads from outlying provinces or by foreign forces. Denial of the main airfield at Jackson's Airport would further delay intervention. Such denial could be achieved quickly by parking trucks on the airstrip as secessionist rebels did at Aropa Airport on

Bougainville. So the army, with parliament as hostage and key points secure, could control the capital — a job which would be made even easier if there were a sympathetic police force and bureaucracy, and public support. Coordination of army action would be facilitated by signal systems independent of the civil authorities (Finer 1988: 7) [the RADSTA station at Taurama Barracks and Joint Force Headquarters Operations Room provide communications links with PNGDF units elsewhere in the country]. Army numbers would swell with the re-enlistment of former soldiers, and the attraction of unemployed youth — as happened during the Bougainville crisis. The military — through control of public transport, food storehouses, telecommunications, the media and by introducing curfews and other security measures — could paralyse the nation for a time, achieving short-term objectives. The PNGDF has learnt from observing, at a distance, coups in Fiji in 1987.

Politicians have been aware that ineffective and corrupt government has the potential to invite a coup. In 1987, Prime Minister Wingti noted in parliament that if politicians wanted to avert a coup they should `shun personal enrichment' (Dorney 1998: 77). Some of the political elite have amassed large fortunes during political office; former Defence Minister Ijape, for example, `left the parliament a wealthy man' (ibid.: 83).

Wingti's preoccupation with coups stemmed from speculation about a PNGDF coup in the wake of the Fiji coups in 1987. Colonel Dademo, then Chief of Staff, seeing opportunity to enhance his career prospects, had reassured Wingti that year that the army was loyal to the government.[172] In contrast, Diro, a long-serving commander, claimed that a coup was possible in PNG (Post-Courier 19 November 1987: 1). (Diro still held that view in 2002 [discussion Brig-Gen Diro 6 March 2002].) The then Defence Minister and former army officer, Pokasui, denounced in 1987 any suggestion of a coup (ibid.: 1). The debate increased awareness in the army of its potential political power, though at the time the PNGDF showed no proclivity to follow Fiji's lead.

---

[172] Wingti was impressed by Dademo's assurances, which probably influenced Wingti's decision to appoint Dademo as commander in 1992.

Causes of Military Intervention

Military forces are especially sensitive to external interference in military issues, especially where such intervention impinges on command and control arrangements, or on decisions regarding the equipping and deployment of forces. African armies have often retaliated to perceived political interference in the defence force. That reaction stems from the belief that the profession of arms is unique, understood only by military professionals. For its part, the PNGDF has resisted government interference though such resistance has been muted at times. PNGDF efforts to protect its interests have also strained relations between the ADF and the PNGDF, especially in relation to the acquisition of equipment.

PNG/Australia Relations

By virtue of its early involvement with the PNGDF, Australia has been a longlasting influence on the Force and on its role in society. The relationship between the PNGDF and Australia, arising from its colonial past, continued well beyond PNG's independence before its decline from the mid-1980s.

Australia's military involvement in PNG during the Second World War and, later, in the face of a potential Indonesian threat, centered on its need to ensure the security of Australia and its territories (See Chapters 2 and 4).[173] That involvement led to the development of an indigenous force in PNG, in preparation for the country's independence in 1975. Australia identified early the need to educate Papua New Guinean soldiers in the role of the army and to provide the skills needed for a professional army. The absence of a military challenge after independence and the PNGDF's success in Vanuatu stand testament to the success of Australia's efforts during the 1960s and early 1970s.

Prior to independence, Australian defence officials recognised that a disciplined force in PNG required adequate pay and conditions, ethnic balance, access to promotion and political office, strong leadership and discipline. Australian defence support after independence, provided through the DC

---

[173] Australia, unlike European colonial powers which withdrew from African colonies at independence, depends in part for its security on a stable Papua New Guinea because of the latter's proximity to Australia.

programme, ensured that, for a time, the PNGDF maintained its standards even as other institutions, such as the police, foundered. However, the Vanuatu operation in 1980 sparked PNGDF criticism of Australia, eventually leading to diversification from 1984 (See Chapter 5). The conditional nature of Australian defence aid and PNG's reliance on substantial aid, caused tensions. PNGDF officers began flirting with Indonesia and other countries for materiel, which Australia was reluctant or unable to provide.

Disagreements during the 1980s — for example over the JDP (see 139-140), the patrol boat programme (see p. 126) and control of DCP funds (see pp. 133-146) — further undermined the relationship. Over time, defence bilateral relations were damaged, being described by Brigadier-General Singirok in 1997 as `less than amicable' (Bohane in *The Canberra Times* 31 May 1997: 5).

Singirok's view was shared by many in the PNGDF, especially, but not exclusively, by those in the lower and middle ranks, who had little exposure to Australians. The colonial legacy was seen more as a historical fact — the PNGDF had long since formed its own traditions and style. PNGDF criticism gained momentum during Bougainville operations (See Chapter 7). Frustration and anger in the face of rebel resistance prompted soldiers to apportion blame for their failures elsewhere. Australia was a convenient scapegoat, being seen as a `fair weather friend' (ibid.: 5) as a result of conditions imposed on its support for Bougainville operations. Soldiers cared little for Australian criticism of their efforts and of their abuse of human rights. Perceptions of Australian interference drew an angry response. Australian officials seemed prepared to accept that risk in the mistaken belief that the friction would be temporary. In time, the conflict would lead to a serious rift in relations.[174] Thus, Australian influence was thwarted, undermining its potential to temper PNGDF indiscipline on Bougainville or any army threat to democracy in PNG.

But the damage to the PNG-Australian defence relationship, which arose

---

[174] Mathias Ijape, defence minister in 1996/97, commenting in 1998 on Australia's role in the Bougainville issue noted `as for helping ... with the conflict on Bougainville, Australia had been worse than useless' (O'Callaghan 1998: 62).

from the events during 1980-90, had profound ramifications. The ADF presence declined over the decade and with it one of the major influences on the PNGDF's subordination to the civil authority. The ADF DC programme became a veneer suggesting close defence links and ongoing influence in the PNGDF which simply did not exist. The PNGDF was deteriorating, racked by widespread indiscipline and a willingness to resort to unrest when the mood took soldiers. The ADF had, since 1984, ceased to be a counter to PNGDF extremes. (In 1991, the JCFADT (1991: 176) concluded that the Australian Defence Cooperation Programme was not sufficiently focussed on Papua New Guinea's `real needs'. Yet, in subsequent years, Australia still resisted assistance to the PNGDF in its internal security role.) If the ADF influence was in decline from the mid-1980s, diversification in the late 1980s accelerated that decline.

Diversification

In 1984, in spite of ongoing assistance from Australia, PNG politicians set the precedent for diversification by looking further afield for defence acquisitions. Their decision to purchase Israeli *Arava* aircraft was criticised within the PNGDF (See Chapter 5). Many PNGDF officers, opposed to the purchase, believed that there had been commissions (kickbacks). Several, including then Colonel Huai, who had led the *Kumul* Force in Vanuatu, resigned in protest over political interference in military decision making. Some officers believed that the *Arava* precedent would be followed by intervention in other military areas. In that, the PNGDF was protecting its corporate position, an action which, according to Perlmutter (1981), could trigger a coup.

The *Arava* purchase was controversial for other reasons. The PNGDF justifiably questioned the aircraft's suitability to PNG conditions and criticised its second-hand-status. In part, also, the *Arava* controversy arose from tensions between Huai and the then PNGDF Commander, Brigadier-General Noga. Huai claimed that Noga should have resisted government pressure to purchase the *Arava*. Noga's willingness to go along with the government on this issue may have been influenced by the fact that he had been earlier passed over for appointment by the government — contrary to the nomination of the Defence

Council[175] — in favour of Gago Mamae, his junior. Upon Noga's appointment as commander in 1984, he had come under pressure following reports of unrest in the ranks, leading to an NIO assessment and criticism of the PNGDF, following claims that army weapons were being used in tribal fights (See Chapter 6). Noga may have prudently chosen to go along with the government's decision to purchase the Arava at the time to shore up his appointment. The friction between Huai and Noga pointed to the emergence of factional powerplay which, until 1984, had been simmering under the surface. The rapid change in commanders after 1984 fuelled the creation of factions.

Notwithstanding its criticism of the *Arava* purchase, the PNGDF embraced diversification. Indeed, by 1986 Huai, then commander, was openly courting alternative sources of defence assistance, principally from Indonesia. Others followed his lead so that by 1990 diversification was a popular theme in defence circles. Senior officers pointed to the purchase of the Spanish *Casa* [176] aircraft and British maritime in-shore craft known locally as the *Binatang,*[177] as examples of diversification which enhanced PNGDF capabilities. The acquisitions implied a PNGDF acceptance of responsibility for its future.

However, decisions were made in isolation rather than as part of a strategic plan to enhance PNGDF capabilities. The PNGDF ran into trouble by investing capital funds in acquisitions — enticed by seemingly generous soft loans — which the army could neither maintain nor afford. Those acquisitions consumed scarce resources, denying the army much-needed uniforms, weapons and rations. Conditions in the barracks deteriorated, and in the field soldiers were unable to sustain operations. The hidden costs of diversification took a toll on the army, from which the PNGDF has yet to recover. Ultimately, the poor state of the Force provided an environment for agitators. Furthermore, diversification provided an environment for wider politicisation of the Force.

The *Arava* purchase aside, diversification was promoted from within the

---

[175] Discussion Brig-Gen Diro of 6 March 2002.
[176] Indonesia also used *Casa* aircraft, providing a potential source of spare parts for PNGDF *Casa*.
[177] A *Tokpisin* word meaning 'insect'.

PNGDF with political and bureaucratic acquiescence. Unlike Third World armies elsewhere, diversification did not cause conflict between the army and the government. Indeed, the PNGDF was not subjected to interference on the scale experienced by African states such as Ghana, Zaire, Nigeria and Mali (Morrison et al. 1989: 161). Problems within the Force caused by diversification were the result of poor decisions, and the hint of corruption among senior officers, rather than government interference. A greater risk to civil/military relations was posed by the government's decision in 1984 to brush aside PNGDF concerns, albeit muted, and use the army in internal security operations, marking a change from the PNGDF's pre-independence priority for external defence.

Conflict of Roles

The PNGDF holds to the view that its principal role is external defence — in spite of its growing commitment to internal security operations. Prior to independence, and under Australia's influence, the army established firmly an external focus. That focus continued in the 1980s, reinforced by PNGDF involvement in Vanuatu. Still, the army was prepared to play a supporting role in internal security, in accordance with army doctrine (See Chapter 6). However, the call-out of the army in 1984 was premature and resulted in soldiers being used as manpower to supplement police operations. The PNGDF's limited role until 1988 did not incite unrest as had occurred in other Third World armies; even so, experience in law and order operations invariably changed the PNGDF, increasing its potential for unconstitutional action.

Internal Security

By 1984, the PNG government, faced with mounting law and order problems, made the decision to call out the troops in a desperate bid to deal with the *raskols* (See Chapter 6). The call-out was authorised by a government led by Michael Somare who, at independence, had opposed the use of soldiers against Papua New Guineans. By using the army, Somare put at risk `the integrity of the PNG state [by becoming] more dependent on the support of security forces in the face of growing law and order problems' (May 1998: 175).

For its part, the public welcomed military assistance as a means of ridding urban areas of the *raskol* menace. As a result, links were cemented with urban populations as they had been in earlier years between PIR patrols and local communities through civic action. Those links extended to the PNG elite, facilitated, as Luckham (1991: 34) suggested, by the army's position as a guarantor of political order. Through public support and government demands for a military role in internal security, the PNGDF established itself as the `power behind the throne' (ibid.: 10). In the process, `political, economic and social forces [were] corroding the apolitical professionalism [of the PNGDF]' (ibid.: 3).

In the period 1984 to 1988, the PNGDF was content to support the police. Friction, where it did occur, was restricted to local issues. In spite of a growing sense of its own importance, the army's limited role in the early years of internal security operations reduced the risk of PNGDF action against the state, in spite of some predictions. (See, for example, Nelson 1972; Mench 1975; Turner 1990; Luckham 1991.) Prior to Bougainville, the PNGDF's internal security role was limited to platoon or company groups (34-120 men) designed to raise the profile of the security forces and free police for operations. Most of the officers involved were junior commanders. The limited deployments therefore had little capacity to damage civil/military relations.

The PNGDF's increasing involvement in internal security, however, coincided with a decline in professionalism which had been evident since the Vanuatu deployment. Internal security operations accelerated that decline. Deployments in support of law and order operations combined with commitments to border security restricted training which might otherwise have addressed indiscipline, poor leadership and declining military capabilities. By 1990, after two years on Bougainville, the PNGDF had become a ragtag army. [178]

Fortuitously, the risks foreshadowed for PNG in the event of the army being used in internal security were not evident during the limited deployments in the 1980s. However, the Bougainville rebellion raised the stakes. Bougainville

---

[178] Later, the government became cautious in using the army, excluding a PNGDF role in the curfew imposed in Port Moresby in 2001, and reluctantly using some troops in the 2002 elections.

rebels posed a serious threat to PNG unity (See Chapter 7). The army's involvement on Bougainville was justified in the wake of policing failures though a military solution was never in prospect. Rebel successes on Bougainville led political leaders to question military judgement.

Military Judgement

By the 1980s, the PNGDF showed signs of morale and discipline problems. Commanders at all levels were experiencing problems in maintaining professional standards. In the absence of these standards, according to Huntington's (1968) argument, the potential for unrest within the ranks was inevitably heightened. Successive defence reports contained reference to disciplinary problems within the Force. Yet few officers accepted responsibility for finding solutions. In 1987, during officer training in 1 RPIR, the disciplinary problem — underscored by mutinies at Taurama Barracks, and, in a separate incident, at Kiunga outstation earlier in 1987 — was discussed with a view to finding a solution to the unit's problems.[179] While all acknowledged the problems and the need to instil professionalism, officers could not agree on a solution. The disciplinary problems continued, contributing to a deterioration in defence capabilities, which became evident on Bougainville in 1988/89, most starkly in the form of human rights abuses. There, the army's disastrous performance `exposed the myth of professionalism' (MacQueen 1993: 147). On Bougainville, PNGDF officers blamed political leaders for their demise.

Few in the PNGDF understood the political leadership's disposition towards compromise and bargaining (cf. Huntington 1957: 62-79). The government ignored PNGDF criticism for fear of provoking an army backlash. When tension subsided, senior officers were replaced.

Army officers were certainly frustrated by the restrictions, imposed by the emergency provisions on the PNGDF's use on Bougainville. Increasingly, the PNGDF was being driven by the need to `equate its own worth, its very identity and honour, with achieving a victory, whatever the cost [and, in so doing, the army was becoming] less responsible to central control' (*Sydney Morning Herald*

---

[179] Author's experience as a military adviser 1 RPIR 1985-88.

16 April 1993). The Bougainville experience, more than any other law and order operation, reinforced for the PNGDF the need to protect its interests, consistent with Perlmutter's (1981) emphasis on corporatism.

In spite of tensions over Bougainville, government interference in PNGDF affairs during 1980-90 was measured, falling short of sparking an army backlash. Even tensions arising from troop reductions in 1986 — the ex-servicemen issue — and the government's failure to deliver on the Ten Year Development Plan (See Chapter 5), were defused. However, soldiers were prepared to challenge the government in 1989 over pay rates.

Internal Triggers

Pay and Conditions. PNG soldiers have been especially sensitive over pay and conditions throughout their history (See Chapters 2 and 6). In 1964, the Administration, aware of PNGDF sensitivity over pay, granted soldiers a pay rise after police mutinied over the issue. A more serious incident, however, was that in 1989 when troops marched on Parliament (See Chapter 6). The PNGDF, to use the words of Sarkesian (1978: 71), felt `obliged to defend its own position and make its own definitions of legitimacy and identity'. Soldiers understood that the threat of force had results.

The PNGDF, as Payne (1993: 118) noted, appropriately, is `widely held to be discontented and acknowledged to be something of a wild card'. Mench (1975: 207) pointed to the inability of defence officers to prevent corporate action. Political leaders, like defence officers, have shown an unwillingness, in the face of PNGDF pressure, to stand firm on pay and conditions. Such caution recognises that army pay is an especially sensitive issue. That sensitivity has come about because soldiers hold staunchly to the view that, in the face of high risks, for example on Bougainville, their role in protecting PNG unity demands adequate compensation.[180] Soldiers argue that they were often `risking their lives on credit' (Dorney 1998: 66). Pay and conditions remain a prickly issue. As

---

[180] Unlike other armies such as in Burma (Silverstein 1998: 82), the PNGDF did not play a role in the fight for independence.

foreshadowed by Nelson (1972: 203), the PNGDF had become accustomed to being generously treated, compared to other institutions in PNG.

Yet, an army response to other issues is not predictable. Soldiers showed little reaction to the government's suspension of the Commander and Secretary of Defence following the pay riots in 1989. Reaction was also muted when the Wingti government reduced the size of the PNGDF from 3500 to 3050 in the mid-1980s.[181] Soldiers gave scant attention to the government's dismissal of several Papuan colonels in 1987. Even the withdrawal of troops from Bougainville, imposed by the government in 1989, failed to ignite tension — at least among the PNGDF.[182] However, on those occasions when soldiers have been pricked into action, such as the 1989 pay riots, the result has been a violent outpouring of pent-up hostility. Since 1989, the reaction has become more vehement. The Force's predictability is further complicated by its factionalism.

Ethnic Tensions. PNG society is characterised by its strong emphasis on tradition, especially *wantok* obligations which enmesh Papua New Guineans in a `web of mutual obligations' (Turner 1990: 142). Such obligations, combined with historical instances of unrest prompted by ethnic issues, threaten civil/military relations. As noted in Chapter 2, the clashes between ethnic groups in 1944 and 1957, illustrate the problem. The wartime clashes prompted a change in the policy of allocating PIB members to units based on close tribal membership. Instead, the new policy emphasised tribal mixes. From 1960, the army made a special effort to break down tribal loyalty to build nationalism. Even then, critics, fearing the consequences, argued that the army was becoming a super tribe.

Even so, tribal loyalties prevail in the PNGDF. The years of independence have done little to `dissolve regional and provincial differences' (MacQueen 1993: 148). Indeed, as professionalism has been undermined in the Force, tribal influences have grown, encouraged by politicisation of the officer corps during 1980-90. On Bougainville, for example, soldiers facing death at the hands of the

---

[181] In contrast, in the late 1990s, government efforts to reduce the size of the defence force prompted armed defiance of the decision on several occasions.

[182] Police elements, however, reacted to their commissioner's call for the arrest of political leaders during the `bar-b-coup' in March 1990, following the withdrawal.

rebels sought out like tribal groups for protection. Such behaviour had underscored Australian policy to allocate men according to tribal origin during the Second World War, but this had led to distortions in tribal representation.

In spite of inter-tribal tensions, which have become more pronounced since 1985, the government has not hesitated in using the army during ethnic unrest. Soldiers were involved during Operation *Southern Breeze* in 1990, following Papuan unrest in Port Moresby. During that period, the PNGDF carried out a difficult mandate with a fair degree of internal cohesion and apparent absence of conflicts of ethnic loyalty (May 1995: 196-197). Even on Bougainville, Bougainvillean soldiers fought against other Bougainvilleans who sided with the rebels. However, the loyalties of soldiers cannot be guaranteed.

The balancing of tribal groups in the officer ranks has been harder to achieve because promotion — at least until 1982 — was based on merit; ethnic imbalance has therefore been more pronounced among senior ranks. The early dominance of Papuans and Islanders ensured their access to promotion opportunities. Wider recruitment had little effect on that situation until 1985 when Paias Wingti, a highlander, became prime minister. He encouraged the advancement of highlanders, calling for the promotion of then Lieutenant Colonel Paul Dala, and later Majors Kanene[183] and Berapu.[184] In time, highlanders, at the urging of their political leaders, will demand a highlands commander — the only region yet to be represented in the appointment. The appointment of commander was bound to become controversial given the established practice of rotating the appointment of officers according to regions. Invariably, highlanders would come to expect their turn, after a series of Papuan and Islands commanders since independence. Wingti was not the only politician to influence promotion. Defence Minister Pokasui, an Islander, was behind the appointment of Brigadier-General Lokinap — the first non-Papuan commander — who came from then Deputy Prime Minister Chan's electorate.

---

[183] Kanene later became head of the NIO, returning to the PNGDF in 2002.
[184] Berapu was later reduced in rank to Major after he unilaterally ordered the withdrawal of 1 RPIR from Aropa during Operation *High Speed II* in 1996.

Political influence has seen the officer corps follow suit in appointing subordinate officers with similar ethnic backgrounds to ensure loyalty. That has been possible because the army continues to control postings, promotion (except for colonels and above), training and, aside from the *Arava* purchase, defence spending. The practice of appointing loyal officers has had a profound effect on Force cohesiveness. Regional and tribal influences within the PNGDF, once identified, may be more readily understood, and the Force's predictability more certain, if that was the nature of the PNGDF. However, the army has become more complex as factions have become more pronounced since the PNGDF became politicised from 1983.

Factions play a key role in military action against the state. Luckham (1991: 28) noted that an analysis of `factionalism is essential to understanding the armed force's political behaviour'. Further, he saw military factions as an `elementary form of political life ... structuring both their own inner conflicts and how and on behalf of who they enter politics' (ibid.).

Few obstacles existed to the formation of coalitions — at the expense of their professional obligations — around those PNGDF officers expected to benefit from changes in government. Paradoxically, in the absence of professional standards, factions became the means of holding the army together since 1989. To some extent, in the absence of professionalism, a PNGDF without factionalism would be impotent. Units are able to conduct operations because of a collective will among factions to participate in those activities. Mutinies by factions galvanise support among other factions in the same way. Officers have since 1988 exercised authority with the connivance of factions.

Factions have been catalysts for intervention even in the absence of broad support from the remainder of the Force. In Bangladesh, where, in spite of the small size, the armed services exhibited a high level of internal rivalry (Ahamed 1998: 107). Factions, for example, were responsible for coups in Sri Lanka in 1962 (See Horowitz 1980), and the Philippines in 1993 (See Monteil 1993). Horowitz (ibid.: 6) noted that `armies in new states are a coterie of distinct armed camps owing primary allegiance to ... mutually competitive ... ranks seething

with corporate, ethnic and personal grievances'. So the existence of factions in the PNGDF is not unexpected. However, the factional makeup is complex, complicated by regional loyalties. Factional membership in the PNGDF is a mix of shifting allegiances: soldiers join with others in search of personal benefit, while changes in senior appointments spawn new affiliations. The factions, with their ever-changing membership and inter-connecting links with former members and *wantoks*, make the Force unpredictable. The experiences of the PNGDF in the 1980s — internal security operations, politicisation of the officer corps and unrest over pay and conditions — saw the spread of factions in the Force. By 1990, they were entrenched, and their influence grew in later years. (Factions played important roles in the Sandline issue in 1997 and during the army mutinies in 2001 and 2002.) The existence of factions increases the likelihood of an army challenge in PNG. Armed elements would be in a strong position to silence voices of dissent and galvanise support within the army.[185] In any event, a successful coup by one group may be seen by others in the military as a `*fait accompli* [making] them acquiesce' (Finer 1988: 227). As Montiel (1993: 11) observed during the Philippines coup of 1993, `loyalty among men in uniform endured'. As Janowitz (1972: 173) noted, soldiers who see the military as a profession are outnumbered by those for whom the army is just another job. Professionalism, which might be expected to constrain unrest, becomes a slippery concept in those circumstances.

Officers are also aware that, with few exceptions, they command little respect among the soldiers, in spite of the high ratio of officers to soldiers (1:9 as at 1990).[186] In 1989, for example, soldiers ignored orders from Colonel Nuia not to march on parliament (Post-Courier 13 March 1989: 4). Indiscipline over the years has eroded officers' control over the Force. Bougainville accelerated that decline, showing that even officers who might otherwise oppose unconstitutional action could be swayed — they invariably harbour grievances of their own.

---

[185] During the Sandline crisis in 1997, soldiers loyal to the commander prevented access to armouries by members of the army opposing his action against the government.

[186] The French army has a ratio of 1:11 while the German army has 1:27 (Weigley 1991: 261). The generous number of officers in the PNGDF accounts for a high proportion of the budget.

Ahamed (1998: 105) noted in the Bangladesh coups that the personal grievances of coup leaders were a precipitating factor. The officers would argue later that their involvement was deemed necessary in order to safeguard the focus of intervention and maintain control over soldiers.[187]

Promotion Expectations. In the run-up to independence, a number of young PNGDF officers were rapidly promoted to ensure the nucleus of a post-independent army. Early promotion ensured that these officers dominated senior positions in the PNGDF until the late 1980s. Tensions in the competition for promotion is one factor in triggering coups (Morrison et al. 1989: 161). In the PNGDF, those tensions were defused by the increasing politicisation of the Force. The first instance of politicisation occurred in 1982 when the government appointed Brigadier-General Mamae as commander, rejecting the Defence Council nominee. Such politicisation was aimed at 'expropriation of senior [PNGDF] positions for purposes of political patronage' (MacQueen 1993: 137). Politicisation removed the professional barriers to promotion, enabling junior officers access to higher ranks, regardless of experience.[188] Performance standards fell by the wayside — a good track record was not a prerequisite for promotion — as senior officers surrounded themselves with a loyal coalition. So rank, at least in the PNGDF's case, does not necessarily reflect experience, education or ability (cf. Huntington 1957: 17).

Officers learnt that promotion depended on the ability to attract political patronage and on the goodwill of others. Governments, seeking loyal and obligated commanders, were receptive to requests from new commanders to be rid of senior officers of questionable loyalty. That precedent was established by the Wingti government in 1987 when three Papuan colonels were dismissed, coinciding with the appointment of Brigadier-General Lokinap (See Chapter 5). (The practice continued in 1992, when Brigadier-General Dademo posted five senior officers overseas, following his appointment (The Times 30 December

---

[187] Officers who joined mutinous soldiers in threatening the Morauta government over its policy to reduce the size of the PNGDF in 2001, justified their involvement on these grounds (discussion Lieutenant Colonel Lytus (Ret'd) of 8 November 2001).

[188] Politicians have not yet sought to influence the selection of individuals for officer training.

1992: 1).) Politicisation of the officer corps during the 1980s undermined the authority of officers in the PNGDF. Luckham (1991: 33) warned that 'officers supporting senior officers beholden to political leaders, for ethnic reasons or reward, have no obligations to politicians'. Rather, politicisation has forged a shared mistrust among officers of their political leaders, creating, paradoxically, common cause among officers to challenge the government. That is in contrast with the view among politicians that political interference in army appointments guarantees loyalty.[189] But political brinkmanship of this nature risks inviting an army challenge, a prospect avoided since independence because the army has seen changes to government as the result of democratic process.

Apart from the adverse effects of politicisation, professional standards of the PNGDF officer corps had been in decline since 1975. The education of officers, essential to a professional army in order to avoid administrative and disciplinary chaos (Weigley 1991: 49), was not evident in the PNGDF (See Chapter 5). Importantly, the emphasis, prominent in the 1960s and the 1970s, in military training on the PNGDF's role in a democracy and its subordination to the civil authority — an approach adopted in the Philippines in 1987 to reduce the risk of coups — has declined since the mid-1980s. The last organised officer training in 1 RPIR was conducted in 1988. As a result, officers have been denied an opportunity to discuss problems facing the Force. For most, promotion was their principal focus. For those replaced, opportunities existed elsewhere, at least until the late 1980s.

Career Ambition. Horowitz (1980: 6) identified ambition as the lynchpin of the *coup d'êtat*. In short, ambition for military promotion or, alternatively, for political office frustrated, heightens the risk of a coup. Senior officers such as Diro, Mamae and Huai, were able to pursue a political career at the completion of their military service. Access to political positions has been cited as reducing the prospect of unconstitutional action (MacQueen 1993: 150). However, the political alternative had mixed success with only three ex-PNGDF officers elected

---

[189] See, for example, demands by Brig-Gen Singirok, an appointee of prime minister Chan, for the resignation of Chan and other ministers over the Sandline issue in 1997 (Dorney 1998).

to the national parliament — Diro, Lowa and Pokasui. Huai and Mamae, among others, were unsuccessful in their attempts. Other officers have opted for public service careers. Colonel Dotaona served as administrator for New Ireland Province while Brigadier-General Noga has played a similar role in Northern Province. Noga was also appointed to head the NIO[190] (and, in the mid-1990s, as High Commissioner to Australia). Others enjoyed diplomatic posts or positions in the private sector. Some army officers have been able to move to lucrative jobs though their success in the long term has been mixed.

By 1990, however, fewer officers pursued these alternative career options, given the mixed success of others. Many chose to remain in the PNGDF, becoming sidelined in the frequent reshuffles of senior appointments. These disgruntled officers and factions sympathetic to their demise adopted the practice of undermining senior office holders from behind the scenes; a practice which became evident in the late 1980s,[191] and more widespread in later years.

Given their mixed success in alternative careers, former officers have not yet penetrated political circles and the bureaucracy in significant numbers nor do they dominate key positions. This is in sharp contrast with Indonesia under Suharto where the military was an essential part of the political system (Lawson, May and Selochan 1998: 11). Indeed, PNG has been careful to limit the army's role, in spite of arguments prior to independence by some, including Sundhaussen (1973: 30), for military representation in the government. Others (cf. Huntington (1968) have opposed that view, believing military involvement in politics would result in a `breakdown of the ... democratic political order'. PNG is unlikely to see changes to legislation to allow serving officers in cabinet, as happened in Thailand (Bunbogkarn 1998: 55). However, some political decisions in PNG have enhanced military power, such as the extension of the military retirement age for officers and the appointment of serving officers to the civil administration have occurred. Politicisation of the officer corps still poses risks for PNG,

---

[190] The head of the NIO in 1999-2002 is also an army officer, Colonel Tokam Kanene.
[191] Colonel Nuia undermined the command on Bougainville of Colonel Dotaona in 1989 by denying much-needed resources in military operations against the rebels.

fracturing loyalty to the government and undermining military command in units. In the process, political awareness has been heightened, creating an environment susceptible to manipulation and political gamesmanship by the military and civilians (cf. Sarkesian 1978: 19). PNG political leaders, while suspicious of the army, recognise that the army's value extends beyond its use as a coercive force.

Political Issues

Exploitation of the Military. Politicians have been prepared to use the army for their own ends. A number of defence ministers have pushed for the relocation of army units to the highlands as a means of developing provincial infrastructure. One minister advocated basing Indonesian exchange personnel in the highlands with the PNGDF so that engineer tasks could be undertaken in the area. Such development initiatives were seen as a means of enhancing political standing. However, the establishment of regional outposts for army units would, were they to go ahead, see troops suffer the disciplinary, rationing and security problems seen at the border outstations from the mid-1980s (See Chapter 4).

Notwithstanding political interest in an enhanced civic action role for the army — the PNGDF Engineer Battalion was relocated to Lae from Port Moresby to provide access to the highlands for that purpose — Bougainville operations and cutbacks in defence funding prevented expanded civic action tasks. Political leaders recognised that the PNGDF's capacity to conduct civic action for political gain was limited.

However, some political leaders invariably see the potential of the army as a means of shoring up their position, claiming a right to govern by virtue of army backing. Political leaders have, on past occasions, looked for other ways to protect their positions. Wingti in 1987 sought to muzzle media criticism of his government in a controversial media bill which was defeated. He also mounted a bid to extend his period in power by resigning as prime minister and seeking re-election, in an attempt to avoid a vote of no confidence (a strategy which was subsequently overturned in the courts). In spite of these efforts, a one-party state in PNG has yet to emerge — Lawson, May and Selochan (1998: 148) pointed to concerns by some that PNG would yield to a one party state or a military

takeover. However, a change in the direction of PNG politics risks inviting a military response, as mooted by Mench (1975: 196) at independence.

The groundwork for the use of the PNGDF to political advantage has already been laid. Political appointments within the Force — the commander and colonels are approved by the NEC — make army officers beholden to politicians, and some are prepared to support unscrupulous leaders. Those circumstances underline the army's potential political power (Mench 1975: 195). Poor governance evident throughout PNG creates those circumstances.

Government Ineffectiveness. Since independence, governments have grappled with problems of governance — at a cost to essential services. All departments, including Defence, have been starved of funds. For its part, the PNGDF has paid lip service to financial limitations. Soldiers recognise from past experience that the government is reluctant to call the army to account, preferring instead to mollify unruly troops. Instances of unrest will continue when army expectations are not met. The basis for the PNGDF's willingness to challenge the government was established in the 1989 pay riots, and on Bougainville in 1989-90. The JCFADT (1991; 165) believed that while the possibility of a coup remained `unlikely — not least because of logistical barriers, ... in one quality the PNGDF is well placed to intervene, if it perceives ... that corruption and instability have rendered the political establishment ineffectual'. Public impatience over service delivery may see the co-opting of soldiers to support public demands for an end to government ineffectiveness and corruption — unstated reciprocity from the army for public support on earlier occasions.[192]

Public support legitimises a role for the army in politics, and facilitates broader backing than the army's factional nature would otherwise allow. However, popular support for army intervention could dissipate if soldiers failed to act responsibly, as happened on Bougainville in 1989. In addition to the legitimacy drawn from the creation of an army at independence (cf. Finer 1988: 6), the PNGDF has also been encouraged by public sympathy in the 1989 pay

---

[192] Soldiers joined public demonstrations during the 1990s to show solidarity with public concern over the Sandline issue, and over student grievances.

riots.[193] Public sympathy could stay the hand of the police, overcoming the last internal obstacle to army intervention. Given public disenchantment, 'the military's deposition of the government by force or the threat of force is at least not resisted and more often than not, is initially very popular indeed' (ibid.: 103). The 1961 coup in Korea was accepted by the populace as an inevitable result of political crisis (Kim 1998: 125). Popular support is not a prerequisite for a coup; it may follow from the promise of change.

The army's involvement in internal security has led the PNGDF to see itself as the guarantor of internal order and therefore of democracy. Many PNGDF officers drew comparisons between the PNGDF and the FMF role in safeguarding national ideals in the Fiji coups of 1987. Luckham (1991: 11) noted, in a comparative context, that `while the military remained in the wings, ... it has been a major actor in the political process by virtue of its proximity to the repressive apparatus of the state'. Sarkesian (1978: 19) shared that view noting that the `military's command of the instruments of violence gives it a political potential'. Mench (1975: 217) believed that the `PNGDF [would] emerge as a significant political force'. That invites officers who might otherwise pursue a political career, as Diro, Lowa and others have done in the past, to see the commander's position as a powerful (and lucrative) alternative. Officers would be attracted to this role (as they were in the 1997 Sandline crisis), especially if they were seen as national heroes, prepared to put aside personal ambition and bear the risks associated with unconstitutional action for the sake of the people.

Popular support has an added advantage for the PNGDF. One of the concerns of PNGDF officers in the past has been uncertainty over Australia's response to instability in PNG. PNGDF action against a democratically elected government would probably see a government under siege request assistance from Australia, as the Namaliu government did in 1989 during the pay riots (See Chapter 6). Consideration had also been given to the use of the ADF on Bougainville (See Chapter 7).[194] The PNGDF has contemplated the possibility of

---

[193] Students and the broader public supported the PNGDF during the Sandline unrest in 1997.
[194] Author's experience as the PNG Desk Officer in DIO 1989-90.

confronting Australians were unconstitutional action taken. Popular support for the PNGDF presents a dilemma for Australian political leaders. They would be hesitant to act if PNGDF actions were seen to be in response to public support for army intervention. Australia has the option to refuse, contrary to Mench's (1975: 188) view that Australia would find it hard to decline a request by the PNG government to intervene in the event of a PNGDF mutiny. (Mench did note that Australia could experience problems distinguishing between a mutiny and a coup.)

Rivalry

Governments in PNG have taken comfort in the notion that the police act as a bulwark against PNGDF unrest. However, police allegiance is not guaranteed, as demonstrated by the Tohian incident in 1990 (See Chapter 7). Like their army counterparts, the police suffer from factional influences, undermining the Constabulary's effectiveness as a counter to the army, and raising doubts about its reliability. (Indeed, the shared experience of Bougainville since 1989, especially among the Mobile Squads and the army, has been the basis for support from police elements during army unrest in the 1990s.) The police too have suffered from politicisation and the cumulative effects of neglect, and the government's willingness to opt for short-term options in response to law and order problems, has resulted in a decline in police capabilities.

National Political/Economic Crisis

'the frequent military ascension to power has often been motivated by a perceived need to save their nations from weak, corrupt, and undisciplined civilian leadership' (Goodman 1990: xiii).

Papua New Guineans have shown a degree of acceptance of difficult economic circumstances but nevertheless have shown concern about the problems within PNG. Sir Ignatius Kilage, then Governor-General, noted in 1985 that unless checked, corruption threatened the nation's stability (Turner 1990: 141). If conditions worsen, and patience runs out, the PNGDF, concerned over internal stability, may perceive a need to intervene. Dorney (1990: 220) quoting the Chief Ombudsman's report of 1982, noted that stage four (of the four stages of

corruption) begins when the 'military, seizing upon the opportunity created by public disenchantment with widespread political corruption, takes power amid a rhetoric of righteousness and morality'. (PNG, according to the then Chief Ombudsman was, in 1982, in stage two of corruption.) Already, the PNGDF revels in its perceived role as what Lissak has described as `guarantor of fundamental and permanent interests of the nation' (1976: 20). Economic policies seen to be benefiting `rich big men' prompted a coup in Uganda in January 1971 while `mismanagement, extravagance ... and moral corruption' resulted in a coup in Congo in 1963 (Morrison et al. 1989: 673/424). PNG shows many of the same pre-conditions.

PNG politicians are aware of the mood of intolerance among Papua New Guineans. Most politicians have stood aside when accused of corruption (like the then Minister of State, Ted Diro in 1991, following the Barnett Inquiry into Forestry) thereby avoiding prosecution under the Leadership Code. Some political leaders have chosen to ignore criticism and cling to power. Political leaders know that the dispersed nature of PNG's population isolates unrest, limiting the threat to their positions, so most of their energy is focused on elections, when their positions come under scrutiny. Then, the voters listen patiently to the `promises having seen little return from previous promises [suspecting that] parliamentary aspirants are feathering their own nests' (Turner 1990: 108).

The army is not immune to corruption, though its incidence has not matched the scale and intensity seen elsewhere in PNG society. For many years after independence tendering processes and restrictions on staff who were authorised delegates mitigated against corrupt practices. However, diversification in the wake of the *Arava* purchase saw foreign companies, less constrained by professional ethics, enter the scene. Some of these saw quickly that potential sales could be secured with gifts and commissions.

In the beginning, the PNGDF was awakened to corruption by small offerings such as free trips or special gifts, for example, during weapon trials of

the Ultimax 100 light machine gun in 1987.[195] At least two senior ranking officers — Brigadiers-General Lokinap and Singirok — received trips overseas at the expense of private companies seeking to sell vehicles to the army. (Singirok was subsequently found in 1999 to have also received a large payment in return for a favourable decision to purchase defence vehicles.) Brigadier General Diro, by 1987 a political leader, may have unwittingly awakened the PNGDF to corruption when he received funds for his political campaign from Indonesia's General Murdani (See Dorney 1990: 203). Brigadier-General Huai also received gifts from General Murdani. Allegations have been made that cars and other gifts were given to some officers by local companies in return for lucrative supply contracts, particularly during the Bougainville crisis. In the latter case, soldiers requisitioned Red Cross supplies for their own use and looted stores and mine housing, transporting the spoils on Defence ships and aircraft to the soldiers' home bases.[196] Certainly, Bougainville provided impetus to PNGDF corruption. The attention of the Ombudsman Commission was first attracted to corruption in the army in 1997. In that instance, Brigadier-General Singirok was found to have received K70000 from a supplier of military materiel (Dorney 1998: 313-314).[197]

For its part, the public does not see the army as a corrupt institution.[198] Most officers seem content for the present to rely on political patronage and the promotion and higher pay and conditions of service that brings. That will change where opportunities for personal benefit are forthcoming (as arose on Bougainville in 1989-2000), for example, through avoidance of the tendering process or while the army is operating under emergency provisions. In the event that corruption were to become more widespread, equipment acquisitions based on such influences rather than on defence combat requirements would further undermine defence capabilities. Corruption in the Force reflects practices already evident earlier in PNG society.

---

[195] Author's experience as an adviser to the PNGDF trial team in 1986/87.
[196] Revealed in discussions between PNGDF officers and the author.
[197] For more on corruption in PNG see Dorney 1990: 215-245 and Turner 1990: 141-146.
[198] Complaints alleging corruption in the PNGDF were not lodged with the Ombudsman Commission until the 1990s.

Public attitudes towards politicians are reflected within the PNGDF ranks. Poor civil/military relations, police/PNGDF rivalry, government ineffectiveness, army factionalism, conflict of roles, diversification issues and pay and conditions — all of these issues have created tensions during the post-independence years, emerging starkly in 1980-90. Collectively, they have created in the minds of soldiers a perceived need to protect their position. In the ensuing atmosphere of tension, events have brought the army closer to intervention. Politicians have been cautious in dealing with the PNGDF though this has not prevented government leaders calling senior officers to account.

All soldiers in PNG are volunteers. High unemployment has ensured a source of recruits though some have had undisclosed criminal histories. Most recruits possess a good education. That has been in sharp contrast with predictions by Janowitz (1972: 171), who suggested that volunteer armies became `increasingly dependent on less advantaged segments of society for manpower'. A broad base of well-educated personnel has resulted in a more politically conscious soldiery who take an increasing interest in the running of government. A good education has led many to resist military discipline, by 1990 a tenuous concept in the PNGDF, raising doubt about the extent to which the officers can hold in check mutinous soldiers. On Bougainville in 1989/90, officers failed to prevent mutinous action on several occasions (See Chapter 7).

A political crisis, especially in cases which ignore democratic process, would invite army intervention. No such action was evident during 1975-90 because the army saw changes of government as democratic. However, in the event of a crisis — arising, say, from an election or during votes of no confidence[199] — the army could find it difficult to resist stepping in as an `arbiter between contending civilian claimants on power' (Luckham 1991: 10). Equally, an economic crisis could prompt an army response. The closure of the Panguna mine, and its subsequent impact on the PNG economy, had that potential. As Rizvi (1998: 99) observed in Pakistan, `any serious crisis of governance ... threatens the military's interests because a society in turmoil and crisis cannot ...

---

[199] There have been three successful votes of no confidence in the period 1975 to 1999.

support a government that has lost credibility'. In the end, the army's actions, will be influenced by its relations with government.

Civil/Military Relations

`[armies will] necessarily be ... the mirrors of the governments and societies that they serve ... many armies ... have organised and operated far more effectively than the political and social apparatus of their ... states' (Weigley 1991: 262).

Relations between the military and the state will on occasions be strained. Huntington (1957: 62-79) noted that the `military's view on security rarely accords with that of the political leadership's assessment of security problems; the latter balancing resource demands ...'. Nowhere, in PNG's case, has that been more evident than on Bougainville. There the PNGDF did not accept the government's willingness to compromise PNGDF gains in order to negotiate.

Before independence, the army had been critical of the government under Michael Somare, who gave the impression that the army was unwanted. On that occasion, political leaders responded by establishing closer links with the army. Yet from the 1980's, such links were not maintained. Janowitz (1964: 65) noted that contact between governments and armies in the third world must be sustained to engender trust. The Diro incident in 1977 was prominent among post-independence tensions (See Chapter 2). Diro was reprimanded though he claimed that the defence minister had been briefed on his plans prior to the event. Diro felt he was a scapegoat. The government would have been more concerned at the time had it known of the existence of the PNGDF's plan (*Electric Shock)* to control key points in Port Moresby if Diro were dismissed.

The extent to which the rank and file knew of Diro's predicament is not altogether clear. Knowledge of the plan was limited, given the sensitive nature of its intent. At the time, Lieutenant Colonel Poang felt compelled to make contingency plans but the will for collective action by the PNGDF was less certain and, in the event, not tested. The belief by some army elements that such a contingency was necessary is noteworthy. Since then, the plan has remained in mothballs at Murray Barracks, passed to successive commanders (discussion,

Brigadier-General Dademo, November 1992) — though not yet put into effect. More incidents followed, each with the potential to provoke the army.

Tensions rose in 1987 when Prime Minister Wingti dismissed three Papuan Colonels (See Chapter 5). Huai saw the decision as a `high level plot' (Post-Courier 2 February 1988: 4), implying Australian involvement in the decision. However, most of the criticism of Wingti's decision came from PNG political circles, prompted by an opportunity for political pointscoring. Josephine Abaijah had sought to do the same in 1977 when Diro faced disciplinary action. Yet, in spite of the outcry, the army stayed outside the issue.

Still, the army has been prepared to protect its interests. In 1988, Brigadier-General Lokinap deployed armed troops to Lae to prevent destruction of the airstrip used by the PNGDF Air Element (See Chapter 5). Operation *Albatross* defied government authority by denying entry to the Department of Works' employees. Lokinap believed that his actions were justified. Indeed, he would have been encouraged by support from Defence Minister Pokasui, a former army officer, who sided with the Commander. Lokinap had hoped the action would safeguard the airport and the government would back down. Control of the airstrip remained with the army in spite of the government reprimand.

Government authority was seriously challenged in 1989 when riotous troops marched on parliament, demanding the government deliver pay increases and improved conditions. Parliament was damaged and politicians jostled. Promises by the deputy prime minister that the problem would be addressed defused the situation. However, soldiers were prepared to take more extreme action by holding Parliament to ransom had the government not capitulated.[200]

On Bougainville, the army was criticised for its withdrawal in May 1990. Media reports claimed the army withdrew unilaterally, ignoring its responsibilities for a handover to the international observer group deployed to monitor the ceasefire (See Chapter 7). The Australian Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JCFADT) pointedly described the withdrawal as a serious breakdown in government control of the Force (quoted in May 1998: 170). At the

---

[200] Discussions with 1 RPIR soldiers at Taurama Barracks 1990-92.

time, PNG political leaders seemed content to allow the army (and the police) to bear the brunt of the criticism. To do otherwise would have called into question the extent of the government's control over its security forces.

So, the PNGDF has a record of mutinous action. Importantly, a worrying pattern emerged from the unrest during the 1980s in which unruly troops mounted increasingly serious demonstrations. (That pattern continued in the 1990s with Sandline, and a series of mutinies in PNGDF units, which saw soldiers arm themselves to underline their determination.) Certainly, the incidents of indiscipline during the 1980's suggest that the army will go to almost any length to safeguard pay and conditions of service. The PNGDF's record of unrest poses difficulties in predicting triggers for unrest. Political leaders cannot be certain of the army's reaction on issues. Even their choice of commander provides no guarantees. Rivalry between the army and police, and the poor state of relations with the bureaucracy, including within the Defence Department, further complicate the situation.

PNGDF/DOD Relations

Since the establishment of a civilian component in the Defence Department at independence, the secretary and his staff have worked in the shadow of the PNGDF. The department has often been a scapegoat for the lack of resources, on occasions becoming the target of PNGDF aggression. In 1989, Secretary Mokis was attacked during the pay riots. In an earlier incident, in 1986, Secretary Bengo, when threatened by unruly soldiers, sought the Commander's protection (discussion, P. Bengo, 17 April 1996).

Soldiers see the Defence Department as a source of obstruction to their goals for expansion and in the payment of allowances. The civilian component in Defence — numbering 200 to 300 staff — recognises that the PNGDF is the real authority. The uneasy alliance has ensured civilian authority is hamstrung and reliant on the PNGDF, frustrating efforts to improve defence management, and PNGDF accountability, which underpinned the creation of the Department of Defence. The situation has not improved, in spite of an often-close relationship

between the commander and the secretary. The blame apportioned to Defence public servants, extends beyond the Department to the wider bureaucracy.

Soldiers and the Public Service

Soldiers have little respect for the bureaucracy, though that has not prevented close relationships between public service officials and army personnel. Those relationships arise from *wantok* links, and attendance at school with classmates who joined the public service. Informal links have also been maintained by social contact. Disdain and, sometimes, animosity, exist in spite of a shared view by soldiers and bureaucrats of politicians, which gives them common cause on some issues. Bureaucrats share the army's plight of inadequate resources, lack of direction and reciprocal loyalty by the government. The public service has often been a whipping post for politicians seeking to deflect public criticism of government failures. The public service's early record of poor performance arose, in part, from rapid expansion and the promotion of inexperienced departmental officers. Bureaucrats, like their army counterparts, may survive changes in government but harbour a dislike of political leaders. More senior appointees, who tend to change with government, maintain links with the army until their reinstatement. The demise of the public sector resulting from politicisation mirrors the problems of the PNGDF, emerging in the late 1980s from the same process. Army officers, appointed to positions in government, understand the true state of the public service.

Army officers serve with Foreign Affairs, including in diplomatic posts, and in the National Disaster Organisation. Brigadier-General Noga was appointed head of the National Intelligence Organisation. Those links could play an important role in any army move against the government. Support from the broader public service is likely to be forthcoming because of shared grievances and attitudes among the PNG population. The public service is likely to be, at the very least, sympathetic to the PNGDF. Turner (1990: 123) lends weight to that view, noting that `bureaucracies generally cooperate ... especially when they interpret [army action] as the triumph of the rational ... over the irrational and chaotic'. Likewise, public service support would lead the population to see army

intervention as more credible. Glanville offered the contrary view that 'a coup would not have popular support [and] an angry populace would not stand passively by and allow the military ... to take the reins of government' (Post-Courier 19 November 1987: 19).

Intelligence has been an important factor in the staging of coups (Luckham 1991: 31). The extent to which intelligence would play a decisive factor in PNG depends on the ability of the army to draw upon intelligence networks; the effectiveness of those networks; and the army's capacity to limit knowledge of its intentions. The Defence Intelligence Branch (DIB) has proven effective in providing intelligence to the PNGDF not otherwise forthcoming through sources in the National Intelligence Organisation. However, the DIB presence is limited to major urban areas. Assistance could be provided by the NIO, which, on two occasions in the past decade, has been commanded by an army officer. Importantly, the army, plotting a takeover, enjoys a potential advantage: intelligence services — run by military officers — may deny the PNG government an independent and reliable source of information on the army and prevent early warning of a move by troops against the government. The gamble, for an interventionist army, in that scenario is that factions — especially *wantok* links — in the army, loyal to political leaders in the government, could undermine plans for a challenge, as occurred in the Philippines in the 1980s and 1990s.

Both the DIB and NIO have links to foreign intelligence agencies. However, information to which the NIO and DIB have access through such links is disseminated according to strict guidelines. Intelligence may not provide the army with early warning of challenges to army authority, risking the use of excessive force in an attempt to maintain authority; poor capabilities also mean that intelligence would not provide warning in the case of foreign intervention.

Prospects of Military Action

> *'there are very few places on earth where treasonable offences, sedition and even mutinous action are not treated very seriously. Papua New Guinea is one such place'* (Editorial in *National* Newspaper quoted in Dorney 1998: 76).

The army's preoccupation with internal security has created the environment for a challenge. Prospects of overseas deployment along the lines of the Vanuatu operation are now remote, in spite of PNGDF attempts in the 1980s to provide officers for UN duties (See Chapter 5). The army's skills — and its leadership — have been eroded during internal security operations. The PNGDF has taken on the shape of a para-military force — albeit more heavily armed — with a limited capability for conventional warfare. Internal security has also led to politicisation of the army. That points to opportunities for collusion between political leaders and army elements, blurring the army's responsibilities. In the process, the army has become a shadow of its former self, just able to sustain operations for short periods in a limited threat environment. The erosion of PNGDF capabilities has come about when the PNG government is under siege, with Port Moresby's writ extending little further than the main urban areas.

PNG's political history shows so far a broad acceptance of the country's Constitution. Unlike the Indonesian military forces (Vatikiotis 1998: 31), the PNGDF swears allegiance to both the government and the country. Views on the prospect of a coup among senior members of the PNGDF vary. In 1987, in the wake of the Fiji coups, Glanville believed that soldiers could not maintain a coup because they would come under attack from civilian forces (Post-Courier 2 Jun 1987: 3). Former Lieutenant Colonel Poang, who planned Operation *Electric Shock* in 1977, accepted that a coup was possible on the basis of `disparities in social and economic development' (Post-Courier 2 Jun 1987: 3). An unnamed serving officer pointed to the probability of a coup given the `immense internal corruption … by large numbers of people' (ibid.: 3). Turner (1990: 121), echoing the views of Huai and Diro, believed `military intervention, a limited action, is well within the realms of possibility'. (Diro still maintains a coup is possible, contingent on a charismatic military leader and the support of trade unions and university students (discussion Brig-Gen Diro of 6 March 2002.).) In spite of PNG's geography and the size of its army, PNG is vulnerable to a coup.

Government Responses

Horowitz (1980: xi) noted that coups succeed by capturing the centre of power quickly ... using surprisingly small amounts of force'. Factionalism, especially that based on ethnicity, PNGDF/police rivalry, and relations with the bureaucracy, would make the course of a coup difficult to predict; the triggers for a coup, and the reaction of political leaders, are also hard to predict. The PNGDF, is based on infantry battalions, capable of being deployed in urban or rural areas; with the potential for involvement in domestic politics (cf. Janowitz 1964). The army's inability to exercise authority beyond the urban centres would not inhibit a coup. Indeed, successive PNG governments have not demonstrated a strong presence beyond the urban areas. Control of the main urban areas would be the key. In the event that the army clung to power, consolidating its hold in the country, troops could be deployed to the key provinces and/or the assistance of the RPNGC could be enlisted.

The difficulty facing PNG governments is one of balancing use of the army in internal security with maintaining the integrity of civil authority and limiting politicisation of the army. Such a balance is difficult to achieve, given the competing demands of political leaders to hold onto power. Politicians showed little interest in co-opting the army in the period 1980-90 by encouraging army unrest to unsettle opponents in the government.[201] However, circumstances may arise whereby the army plays a role in securing or holding onto political power, such as occurred under Marcos in the Philippines, leading to the imposition of martial law. The PNGDF therefore `needs ... care and more effective control to realise its full potential as a national asset' (O'Connor 1994: 10) — that is the PNGDF's effectiveness as an asset could be degraded if the Force became too involved in internal security. In the early days, civic action ensured that the army was involved with the broader community but that involvement has declined with the PNGDF's withdrawal from civic action since the late 1980s. Mench (1975: 213) suggested that a containment approach may be

---

[201] In 1997, some politicians surreptitiously tested the willingness of senior army officers to support political objectives but without success (discussion Brig-Gen Nuia of 18 August 2001).

possible in PNG, whereby the PNGDF is placed within a political system with a defined role that would 'reduce the Defence Force's corporate isolation' (ibid.: 213) (See also Sundhaussen 1973: 30). No support for that approach has been forthcoming among PNG political leaders.[202]

The government cannot rely on the constitutional provisions for a separate army and police force, or in the balance between of the two forces. The army's superiority in firepower and its concentration of units in key urban areas, especially the capital, provide a marked advantage over the police. That could leave few options but to seek foreign intervention, especially from Australia.[203] Mench (1975: 187) did not rule out the possibility of a government seeking external assistance. Intervention by former colonial powers is not unusual: French Forces put down insurgencies in Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Congo and Gabon (Morrison et al. 1989: 161).

Foreign intervention, even when backed by strong political will, however, faces potential risks, including casualties on both sides and among the civilian population. The Australian government would need to bear those risks in restoring order.

If it did intervene, the PNGDF might not want to assume power for the long term, fearing, as Finer (1988: 27) suggests, `that if they intervene and are vanquished ... the army itself will be forfeit'. The army might hold onto power until a civilian alternative was identified, focussing their efforts on the maintenance of law and order and an early return to civilian rule. By so doing, the military might protect its position in PNG and attract patronage and resources vital to its needs.

****

[202] Attempts by political leaders in the late 1980s to use the PNGDF for wider civic action tasks were thwarted by the Force's commitment to Bougainville operations (See Chapter 4).
[203] By day 4 of the Sandline crisis in 1997, Defence Headquarters in Canberra was considering ADF options to assist the PNG government restore order (O'Callaghan 1999: 158).

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This thesis has focussed on the period 1980-90, during which the principal influences on the PNGDF's decline became starkly evident.[204] Importantly, the PNGDF showed in that period a willingness to take increasingly serious unconstitutional action. Notwithstanding its accomplished war record and its fine tradition, the PNGDF has been dogged by indiscipline, including mutinous behaviour, even from the early days following formation of the PIB/NGIB. By the 1980s, the instances of unrest were growing in frequency and scope, accelerated by politicisation, declining professional standards, a refocus from external to internal defence, and the erosion of defence relations with Australia.

The absence of a military challenge in the years after independence was due in large part to the continued high profile of the ADF in PNG — at least until the mid-1980s. That ensured the maintenance of professional standards and, in the absence of an internal security commitment before 1984, subordination to the civil authority. Moreover, the PNGDF, like the broader populace, took comfort in the central role of democratic process in changes of government.

But the decline in ADF influence which began with Australia's qualified support of the PNGDF's Vanuatu deployment in 1980, coincided with declining professionalism. The rift in ADF/PNGDF relations widened as the PNGDF was drawn into internal security operations. The mid-1980s proved a watershed in relations in the wake of PNGDF criticism of the Joint Declaration of Principles, the Pacific Patrol Boat Programme, and access to DC funds for PNGDF priorities. In 1989-90, Bougainville operations all but ended the defence relationship, damaged by the conditions imposed on the use of helicopters, criticism of PNGDF human rights abuses and failure to provide much needed logistic support. The resulting loss of Australian influence ensured that from the mid-1980s, subordination of the PNGDF to the civilian authority became a tenuous concept: the PNGDF openly challenged the government in Lae in 1988 during Operation

---

[204] The reasons for focussing on this period, which have to do with my previous employment are explained in Chapter 1.

Albatross and, in spite of government action to bring the Force under its control, soldiers attacked parliament eight months later. On Bougainville, within twelve months of its deployment, army operations sabotaged government attempts for a negotiated settlement, and perpetrated human rights abuses against the local population and members of the provincial government — in defiance of international condemnation. So tenuous was government control over the PNGDF that the army was withdrawn from Bougainville, abandoning Bougainvilleans to internecine conflict. Thereafter the extent of government control over the PNGDF would be in question.

Potential to sour civil/military relations was not confined to internal security operations. Pay and conditions have been prickly issues throughout the PNGDF's history. Soldiers have shown a consistent willingness to protect their corporate well being. Their determination has been unstinting, in a history of incidents within the barracks, and manifestly, in the pay riots of 1989. In that instance, their demands were taken to the steps of parliament, where concessions probably headed off a more violent threat to political leaders. We should have no doubt, given the PNGDF's history, that troops will protect, aggressively if necessary, their pay and conditions of service.

The army's response to other issues has not always been as predictable. Political interference in officer appointments in the 1980s — even when several officers were dismissed in 1987 — drew little response. But politicisation of the officer corps and the institutionalisation of factionalism which began in the 1980s, have ensured that vested interests, with diminished prospects of political careers, will continue to jockey for power. Foremost among those vested interests are highlanders who, encouraged by political leaders such as Wingti in 1987, have come to expect, from the rotation of the commander's appointment among regions, their turn at the spoils of office.

The events of the 1980s highlighted by the Fiji coups (1987), pay riots (1989), and the Bougainville campaign (1989-90), cast doubt on the effectiveness of safeguards put in place at independence to keep the army in check. A policy of balancing Force numbers against those of the police assumed police loyalty to the

government; the Tohian 'bar-b-coup' in 1990 and the shared experience of the army and police on law and order operations between 1984-90 casts doubt on the extent to which the police are likely to act as a counter to army excesses. Moreover, the limited size of the PNGDF has proved no barrier to its exerting pressure on the government — several hundred unarmed soldiers were enough to wring concessions from government in 1989.

Successive governments have been culpable in the erosion of professionalism in the PNGDF. Politicisation of the officer corps fuelled factional divisions and resulted in the promotion of officers based on political imperatives rather than merit. Those officers sidelined in the process undermined the authority of unit commanders and their control over the rank and file.

By the 1990s, factions had emerged as the catalyst in army indiscipline and, as such, pose the principal risk as a trigger for an army challenge. Officers, who might be expected to temper army unrest, harbour their own grievances and are beholden to factions through which, as became evident on Bougainville in 1989-90, officers draw much of their authority. Officers lost their standing and respect among the troops after the 1980s, forfeiting that entitlement by siding with soldiers or by failing to check soldiers' excesses. Officers have been complicit in Force machinations aimed at undermining competitors for promotion. The absence of professional training, especially in the principles of the army's subordination to the civil authority, further eroded the officers' effectiveness.

Politicisation has been instrumental in undermining the PNGDF officer corps. The appointment of officers on political grounds has removed the natural barriers to promoting poor performers. Few alternatives exist for officers cast aside in politically-sponsored reshuffles, and by 1990 this had become a regular feature in the Force. Political careers lost favour following the limited success of former PNGDF officers; Lowa (1977), Diro (1982) and Pokasui (1987) were the exceptions. Divisions in the officer corps, and the rewards on offer from political leaders for army acquiescence, ensured few obstacles existed to wider political interference. Already in the decade 1980-90, political leaders had imposed the *Arava* purchase, changed five PNGDF commanders in eight years, and relocated

the Engineer Battalion to facilitate a wider army role in civic action. Only the Bougainville rebellion distracted attention from the army's historically limited role in civic action.

The preparedness of successive governments to use the army in internal security is inexcusable. No justification existed prior to Bougainville in 1988 for the call-out of the soldiers. But the damage to PNGDF professionalism could have been contained if the government had used troops consistent with the army's internal security doctrine. Instead, soldiers were separated from their commanders and replicated the role of the police — especially the mobile squads. Professionalism invariably suffered as the army struggled to meet the demands for manpower arising from law and order operations between 1984-88 and the need to maintain a credible presence along the PNG/Indonesian border, and conduct much-needed training. By 1990, Bougainville operations demanded the PNGDF's principal attention, at the same time reducing the PNGDF presence at the border outstations to a token few troops repatriated from Bougainville, many for human rights abuses. Also by 1990, the cumulative detrimental impact of law and order operations transformed the Force from a professional army to a ragtag group, prone to indiscipline. Soldiers held the government in contempt, setting their own rules for their conduct on Bougainville — the St Valentine's Day massacre underlining their approach to rebel intransigence — and on their return to the mainland. The government's failure to prosecute those involved in the pay riots, and the government's preference to grant amnesty to those accused of human rights abuses further damaged civil authority in the eyes of the troops. (By 2001, armed mutiny by disaffected soldiers would again result in amnesty for the conspirators.) The soldiers were quick to learn that the army held the whip hand; the government's capitulation in the face of military determination set new and dangerous precedents.

Public service dealings with defence take their cue from the government. Since the mid-1980s, Defence Department civilians have accepted their place in the shadow of the PNGDF. Many in the public service — and the police —

sympathise with the army, sharing their dislike of political leaders who have been only too willing to use the bureaucracy as a whipping post for failed policy.

The conditions which have prompted Third World armies to challenge government therefore exist in PNG. Already, the PNGDF has shown a willingness to defy government authority when the mood takes it. Since independence, PNGDF indiscipline has increased in scale, frequency and violence. PNGDF action will always be unpredictable, given the factional nature of the Force, its poor leadership, and indiscipline. Predictability is further complicated by the army's increasing tendency to shirk responsibility for its actions, an approach encouraged by the failure of court proceedings to bring unruly members to account. However, the PNGDF is not the only uncertainty. Papua New Guineans have become impatient with the pace of change and shown a willingness to demonstrate against underdevelopment and political corruption. Elections, the principal tool to redress government failings, occur every five years, frustrating a population impatient for government action. The public views the PNGDF as a protector, arising in part from its law and order profile. Views within the PNGDF have historically reflected those of the wider society; little separates military and civilian attitudes to government. Soldiers like their civilian counterparts experience problems with housing, access to education, and with rising prices.

The PNGDF's new-found status is accentuated by the poor state of other government institutions. There has been growing public criticism of bureaucratic inefficiency and friction between officials in national and provincial administration as reasons for underdevelopment. The police have been criticised over their failure to reverse the trend in law and order, in spite of costly police operations. Both the public service and the police share grievances with soldiers; in the case of the police, the two have been brought closer by their shared experience on Bougainville. The police and public service are thus less likely to oppose unconstitutional action.

Analysis of the PNGDF's capacity to mount a challenge, based on its chequered history to date, also raises fundamental questions about its capacity to

fulfill its external defence and internal security roles under the Constitution. The PNGDF could not mount a Vanuatu-style operation without undergoing a long period of intense training, and receiving the support of a foreign power, and putting at risk PNG's internal stability. Already, the PNGDF's ability to maintain border surveillance, or respond to internal contingencies, is limited.

In the absence of collective commitment among political leaders in PNG to reverse the trends of recent years — corruption, law and order problems, government ineffectiveness and army indiscipline are but a few — the risk of an army coup against the state is in prospect. The success of an army coup in the long term is less certain; the army, given its limitations, could not guarantee improved governance in PNG. Still, a coup will take place so long as challenges to state control go unanswered and PNG political leaders place personal interests ahead of the country's development.

****

Chronology

1940	19 Jun	Formation of the Papuan Infantry Battalion
1942	23 Jul	First Action – Awala
1944	Mar	Formation of the First New Guinea Infantry Battalion
1944	Sep	Formation of the Second New Guinea Infantry Battalion
1945	Aug	Formation of the Third NGIB
1949	Jul	PNG Volunteer Rifles formed
1950		Pacific Islands Regiment reformed
1952	Oct	Vanimo outstation established
1953		Patrols begin from Vanimo
1956	4 Jul	Presentation of colours to PIR by Sir W. Slim
1957		Riots
		PIR expanded
1961		Riots
1962	Feb	Cape Moem base established
	11 Mar	Trooping of the Colours with Battle Honours
1962		Aerial mapping of the border
1962		United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) assumes administrative control of West New Guinea
1963		Indonesia assumes control from UNTEA over West New Guinea
		Australia commences defence expansion ($1.5b)
1963		reports of Indonesian forces crossing border
1963	Dec	First Papua New Guineans commissioned
1964	Jan	PNG Recruit Training Depot set up at Goldie River
1964	Sep	Boots, Puttees and Hose Tops replace sandals
1965	3 Jan	2PIR formed
		Exercise *Badwash* - first in border area
		Minor clashes between Indonesians and Papuans
1969		Indonesian patrol enters Wutung (PNG)
	18 May	Indonesian patrol enters Kwai (PNG)

		Patrol in Green River
		Security situation in border area deteriorates
1970	Nov	First in-service commission - Goldie River
		Border defined with 6 meridian markers in northern sector
	1 Jul	OPM declares West Papuan independence
		Troops on stand-by - Gazelle unrest
	Aug	Papua New Guinea-Indonesia Border defined with 8 meridian markers in southern sector
1972		PNG House of Assembly fully elected
1973	26 Jan	PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) designated
		Large-scale patrolling by PIR resumed
1973	12 Feb	Indonesia/ Australia fix boundary
1974	26 Nov	Indonesia/Australia agree on border arrangements
1975	16 Sep	PNG Independence
1977		Brig-Gen Diro reprimanded over meeting with OPM
		Indonesian reprisals against OPM and villagers – 3000 flee
1981	Jul	Major clash between OPM factions
1982	Sep	OPM leader (Rumkorum) arrested near Rabaul
		Series of border clashes
		12,000 border crossers move into camps in PNG
1985	May	200 PNGDF/Police deploy to Bewani
	Oct	Acting Prime Minister Momis – PNG not to be used for terrorist activity
1985	17 Jun	State of Emergency - Port Moresby (Op *Green Beret 85*)
1986	Mar	Wingti seeks closer military ties with Indonesia
		Kiunga outstation established
1987	15 Apr	State of Emergency-Highlands/Lae (Op *Green Beret 87/Koolex*)
	Mar	Signing Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship & Cooperation with Indonesia
	9 Dec	Signing Joint Declaration of Principles with Australia

1988		Operation *Apple Pie*
1988	6 Jun	PNGDF unilaterally secure Lae Airport (Op *Albatross*)
	12 Sep	State of Emergency - Highlands (Op *LOMET*)
	3 Oct	Troops assist in security at Ok Tedi (Op *Iron Foot*)
	Nov	Applied Geology Assoc. delivers findings on Environment, Socio-Economic Public Health review, Bougainville - Ona walks out of meeting in disgust
	22 Nov	Theft of explosives - Panguna Mine magazine
	26 Nov	First pylon toppled/Police reinforcements deployed to Bougainville to protect the mine - Operation *Tampara* commences
	29 Nov	Explosives stolen from Limestone Mining Co. at Manetai
	1 Dec	Second pylon toppled at Pakia.
	2 Dec	Camp 6 (Pink Palace) at Loloho destroyed by fire
	7 Dec	Police Commissioner orders police to shoot to kill More police reinforcements deployed.
1989	1 Jan	Mathew Kove (Ona's uncle) kidnapped
	15-17 Jan	Attacks on BCL property
	28 Jan	Curfew imposed on Bougainville (until 3 March)
	6 Feb	Troops march on Parliament in Port Moresby
	24 Feb	Demands - K10 million; new economic order or secession
	6 Mar	Curfew relaxed to 2200-0500 Police confront Momis over alleged threat to sack Tohian
	14 Mar	Bougainvillean woman raped and killed by Highlanders
	15 Mar	Kauona orders *redskins* to leave Bougainville by 17 March
	16 Mar	2 Highlanders killed at Aropa
	21 Mar	Clement Kavuna dies in police custody
	30/31 Mar	PNGDF deploy to Bougainville - Operation *Blue Print*
	5 April	PNGDF ultimatum, calling on Francis Ona to surrender
	6 Apr	2Lt S. Yandu & Pte M. Ramos Killed in Action (Bougainville)

Apr	State of Emergency - Port Moresby (Operation *Southern Breeze)*
	Government offers K200 million package of development
12 Apr	PNGDF seek helicopters for medivac
25 Apr	S76A Sikorsky arrives on Bougainville
5 May	Private Buka killed on Bougainville
6 May	Attacks on BCL workers on bus - mine closes
17 May	Cabinet increases the powers of the security forces
18-22 May	Mine employees, including an expatriate, shot
22 May	2 pylons toppled
25 May	Government declares 14 day truce
14 June	Perpetua Serero dies
20 June	BRA outlawed by the PNG government
26 Jun	State of emergency (SOE) imposed
Jun	Australia cautions its citizens against travel to Bougainville
29 Jun	B Company mutinies on Bougainville
1 Jul	Operation *Nakmai Maimai* - to clear the Port-Mine Access Road
3 Jul	Premier Kabui and M. Laimo assaulted by police
6 Jul	Battalion headquarters moves to Panguna
12 Jul	Op *Bull Dog* - to clear the mine environs
1 Aug	Australian helicopters arrive
4 Aug	Operation *Kisim Dog* - to clear BRA from the Kongara
14 Aug	SOE extended 2 months
15 Aug	Peace talks - Koromira
17 Aug	Soldiers accidentally kill another soldier
22 Aug	All troops withdrawn to Panguna
6 Sep	Pylon toppled
12 Sep	John Bika killed/ Government issues reward for Ona and Kauona K200,000
10 Oct	Colonel Nuia assumes command

	27 Oct	Peace ceremony - *Breaking of the Spears*
	11 Nov	Rebels declare Republic of Mekamui
	12 Nov	Pylon toppled
	29 Nov	3 police killed at Aropa
		BCL announces retrenchments and mine ceases production
1990	11 Jan	Cpl Karobata shoots mother and baby - manslaughter
	12 Jan	SOE extended for two months
	17 Jan	Kuveria Gaol attacked - five warders killed
	24 Jan	Australian government warns all Australians without essential business on Bougainville to leave
	Feb	BCL evacuates mine personnel
	12 Feb	Battle of Buka - 4 PNGDF killed
	14 Feb	St Valentine's Day massacre
	2 Mar	Ceasefire
	14 Mar	Tohian bar-b-coup
	16 Mar	Australian government advises all Australians to leave Bougainville
	16 Mar	Security forces leave Bougainville
	15 May	Port Moresby imposes an economic blockade
	17 May	Unilateral declaration of independence Republic of Mekamui

Bibliography

Official Documents

Australian Government, 1994. *Bougainville: A Pacific Solution - Report of the Visit of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Bougainville,* 18-22 April 1994. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JCFADT), The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1991. *Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea*, Canberra: Senate Publishing and Printing Unit.

Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JCFADT), The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1996. *Papua New Guinea Update*, Canberra: House of Representatives.

Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) (Papua New Guinea), 1974. *Final Report*. Port Moresby.

Defence General Board of Inquiry, 1989. *Report of the Defence General Board of Inquiry into Administration and Management of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Defence Department*. Boroko: Department of Defence.

Department of Defence (Australia), 1995. *Defence Cooperation*. Canberra: Department of Defence, Inspector General Division.

Department of Defence (Australia), 1994. *Defence Co-operation*. Canberra: Defence Publishing.

Papua New Guinea. *Defence Reports 1979-1990*. Boroko: Hebamo Publishing.

Papua New Guinea, 1991. *Security for Development: Integrating the Government's Response to the National Summit on Crime into a Comprehensive and Planned Approach to Law and Order*. Port Moresby: Government Printer.

Books and Periodicals

Ahamed, E., 1998. `Military and democracy in Bangladesh' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 101-118.

Amnesty International, 1990. *Papua New Guinea: Human Rights Violations on Bougainville 1989-90*. London: Amnesty International. Mimeo.

Amnesty International, 1993. *Under the Barrel of the Gun, Civil Conflict and Human Rights on Bougainville, 1991-93*. London: Amnesty International.

Ball, D. and Downes, C. (eds.), 1990. *Security and Defence: Pacific and Global Perspectives*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Barrett, D., 1969. `The Pacific Islands Regiment' in K.S. Inglis (ed.), *The History of Melanesia*. Canberra: The University of Papua New Guinea and the Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University. pp 493-502.

Beasant, J., 1984. *The Santo Rebellion: An Imperial Reckoning*. Richmond: Heinemann Publishers.

Bell, H., 1967. `Integrating the P.I.R.', *New Guinea* 2 (2): 49-58.

Bohane, M., 1997. `Hostility grows in the heat of Bougainville', *Canberra Times*, 31 May 1997.

Brunton, B., 1986. `Crime politics and economics' in L. Morauta (ed.), *Law and Order in a Changing Society*, Political and Social Change Monograph 6, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 30-40.

Bunbongkarn, S., 1998. `The military and democracy in Thailand' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 47-58.

Clifford, W., Morauta, L. and Stuart, B., 1984. *Law and Order in Papua New Guinea*. Two Volumes. Port Moresby: Institute of National Affairs and Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research.

Clunies-Ross, A. and Langmore, J. (eds.), 1973. *Alternative Strategies for Papua New Guinea*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Cochran, C. L. (ed.), 1974. *Civil-Military Relations: Changing Concepts in the Seventies*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Colebatch, P., 1974. *To Find a Path: The Army in Papua New Guinea*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sussex.

Connell, J., 1990. `The Panguna mine impact' in P. Polomka, `Bougainville: Perspectives of a Crisis', *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence*. No. 66, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 43-46.

Dibb, P. and Nicholas, R., 1996. *Restructuring the Papua New Guinea Defence Force: Strategic Analysis and Force Structure Principles for a Small State*. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University.

Dinnen, S., 1986. `Perspectives on law and order' in L. Morauta (ed.), *Law and Order in a Changing Society*, Political and Social Change Monograph 6, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 76-89.

---------, 1996. `Order in the Year of Law Enforcement: Papua New Guinea', *Pacific Economic Bulletin* 11(2): 91-99

---------, May, R. and Regan, A.J., 1997. *Challenging the State: The Sandline Affair in Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University.

Dorney, S., 1990. *Papua New Guinea: People, Politics and History Since 1975. Sydney:* Random House.

---------, 1998. *The Sandline Affair: Politics and Mercenaries and the Bougainville Crisis*. Sydney: ABC Books.

East, C., 1981. `Vanuatu — an inside story', *Pacific Defence Reporter* 8(1): 91-99.

Finer, S. E., 1988. *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*. London: Penguin.

----------, 1985. `The retreat to the barracks: notes on the practice and the theory of military withdrawal from the seats of power', *Third World Quarterly* 7(1): 16-30.

First, R., 1970. *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d' Etat*. London: Allen Lane.

Forster, M., 1992. `The Bougainville Revolutionary Army', *Contemporary Pacific* 4(2): 368-72.

Fraser, H., 1989. `Bougainville dances to Diro's unpredictable tune', *Pacific Defence Reporter* 16(2): 33-34.

Gifford, P. and Lewis, W. M. (eds.), *Decolonisation and African Independence: The Transfer of Power 1960-1980*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Glanville, I., 1984. `The changing face of Papua New Guinea's Defence Force', *Pacific Defence Reporter* 10(10): 13, 15.

Goldring, J., 1978. *The Constitution of Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: The Law Book Co.

Goodman, L. W., 1990. `The military and democracy: an introduction' in Goodman, L. W., Mendelson, J. S. R. and Rial, J. (eds), *The Military and Democracy. The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America.* Lexington: Lexington Books. pp xiii-xx.

Goodman, L. W., Mendelson, J. S. R. and Rial, J. (eds), 1990. *The Military and Democracy. The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America.* Lexington: Lexington Books.

Granter, N.E.W. (ed.), 1970. *Yesterday and Today: An Illustrated History of the Pacific Islands Regiment from its Formation on 19 June 1940 Until the Present Day*. Port Moresby: South Pacific Post.

To Find a Path: History of the Pacific Islands Regiment, 1966. Taurama Barracks, Port Moresby.

Griffin, J., 1972. `Bougainville - secession or just sentiment?', *Current Affairs Bulletin* 48(9): 259-280.

---------, 1976. `Secessionist movements and their future in Papua New Guinea', *World Review* 15(1): 23-36.

----------, 1982. `Napidakoe Navitu' in R. J. May (ed.), *Micronationalist Movements in Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Political and Social Change Monograph 1. Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 113-138.

----------, Nelson, H. and Firth, S., 1979. *Papua New Guinea: A Political History.* Richmond: Heinemann Educational.

----------, 1990. `Bougainville is a special case' in May, R. J. and Spriggs, M. (eds), *The Bougainville Crisis.* Bathurst: Crawford House Press. pp 1-15.

Grosart, I., 1982. `Nationalism and micronationalism: The Tolai case' in R. J. May (ed.), *Micronationalist Movements in Papua New Guinea.* Canberra: Political and Social Change Monograph 1. Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 139-175.

Gubb, M., 1994. *Vanuatu's 1980 Rebellion: International Responses to a Microstate Security Crisis.* Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 107, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.

Gutteridge, W. F., 1975. *Military Regimes in Africa.* London: Methuen.

Hannett, L., 1975. `The case for Bougainville secession', *Meanjin Quarterly* 34(3): 286-293.

Harris, B. M., 1988. *The Rise of Rascalism: Action and Reaction in the Evolution of Rascal Gangs*, Boroko: Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research, IASER Discussion Paper No. 54.

Hasluck, P., 1976. *A Time for Building: Australian Administration in Papua and New Guinea 1951-1963.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Hastings, P., 1969. *New Guinea. Problems and Prospects.* Melbourne: Cheshire.

----------, 1971. 'Thoughts on Taurama: the myth of a non-political army', *New Guinea* 6(1): 28-32.

Heeger, G. A., 1977. `Politics in the post-military state: some reflections on the Pakistani experience', *World Politics* 29(2): 242-62.

Hegarty, D. (ed.), 1983. *Electoral Politics in Papua New Guinea: Studies on the 1977 National Elections.* Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea Press.

---------, 1987. *South Pacific Security Issues: An Australian Perspective*. Working Paper No 147, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.

Horner, D. (ed.), 1995. *Armies and Nation Building*. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.

Horowitz, D. L., 1980. *Coup Theories and Officers' Motives. Sri Lanka in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Huntington, S., 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

---------, 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Janowitz, M., 1964. *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An Essay in Comparative Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

---------, 1977. *Military Interventions and Coercion in the Developing Nations*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Jinks, B., Biskup, P. and Nelson, H. (eds.), 1973. *Readings in New Guinea History*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers.

Kemelfield, G., 1990. `A short history of the Bougainville ceasefire initiative', in R. J. May and M. Spriggs (eds), *The Bougainville Crisis*. Bathurst: Crawford House Press. pp 62-72.

Keogh, E. G., 1965. *South West Pacific 1941-45*. Melbourne: Grayflower Productions.

Kim, Y.M., 1998. `Patterns of military rule and prospects for democracy in South Korea' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 119-131.

Lawson, S., May, R. J. and Selochan, S., 1998. `Introduction: democracy and the military in comparative perspective', in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 1-28

Lawson, S., 1998. 'The military versus democracy in Fiji: problems for contemporary political development' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 132-147.

Layton, S., 1992. `Fuzzy Wuzzy Devils: mass media and the Bougainville Crisis', *Contemporary Pacific* 4(2): 299-323.

Lee, J. M., 1969. *African Armies and Civil Order*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Liria, Y., 1993. *Bougainville Campaign Diary*. Melbourne: Indra Publishing.

Lissak, M., 1976. *Military Roles in Modernisation: Civil-Military Relations in Thailand and Burma*. Beverley Hills: Sage.

Long, G., 1963. *The Final Campaigns, Australia in the War of 1939-1945 (Army).* Adelaide: The Griffin Press.

Luckham, R., 1991. *The Military, the Development State and Social Forces in Asia and the Pacific: Issues for Comparative Analysis*. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University Working Paper No. 104.

Lynch, P. R., 1969. `The coming army', *New Guinea* 4(1): 21-23.

MacQueen, N., 1993. `An infinite capacity to muddle through' in P. Sutton and A. Payne (eds), *Size and Survival: The Politics of Security in the Caribbean and the Pacific*. London: Frank Cass & Co. pp 133-152.

Mapusia, M., 1986. `Police policy towards tribal fighting in the highlands' in L. Morauta (ed.), *Law and Order in a Changing Society*, Political and Social Change Monograph 6, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 57-69.

May, R. J. (ed.), 1982. *Micronationist Movements in Papua New Guinea*, Political and Social Change Monograph 1, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.

--------, (ed.), 1986. *Between Two Nations: The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border and West Papua Nationalism.* Bathurst: R. Brown and Associates.

----------, 1993. *The Changing Role of the Military in Papua New Guinea*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 101, Australian National University Canberra.

---------, 1995. 'The Role of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force in Building Papua New Guinea', in Horner, D. (ed.), *Armies and Nation Building*. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra. pp 183-199.

---------, 1996-97. *The Situation on Bougainville: Implications for Papua New Guinea, Australia and the Region*, Parliamentary Research Service, Current Issues Brief No. 9. Canberra.

---------, 1998. `Government and the military in Papua New Guinea', in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 148-175.

May, R. J. and Selochan, V. (eds), 1998. *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing.

May, R. J. and Spriggs, M. (eds), 1990. *The Bougainville Crisis*. Bathurst: Crawford House Press.

Mazrui, A. and Rothchild, D., 1967. `The soldier and the state in East Africa: some theoretical conclusions on the army mutinees of 1964', *Western Political Quarterly* 20(1): 82-96.

McCarthy, D., 1962. *South-West Pacific Area-First Year: Kokoda to Wau. Australia in the War of 1939-1945 (Army)*. Canberra: Australian War Memorial.

McGeough, P., 1995. `PNG in crisis: our troubled neighbour', *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 January 1995.

McKay, G., 1987. *In Good Company: One Man's War in Vietnam*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

McKillop, R. F., 1982. 'Papua Besena and Papuan separatism' in R. J. May (ed.), *Micronationist Movements in Papua New Guinea*, Political and Social Change Monograph 1, Department of Political and Social Change,

Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. pp 329-358.

Mediansky, F. A., 1970. 'New Guinea's coming army: acquiring politically useful skills', *New Guinea* 5(2): 37-42.

Mench, P., 1975. *The role of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force*. Development Studies Centre Monograph No. 2, National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

Mihalic, F., 1976. *The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin*. Milton: The Jacaranda Press.

Millar, T. B., 1965. `The defence of New Guinea', *New Guinea* 1(1): 68-75.

----------, 1978. *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations 1788-1977*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Montiel, C. J., 1993. `Bargaining with anti-government military forces: a study of three Philippine coup attempts', *Peace Research Centre Working Paper No. 130*, Australian National University, Canberra.

Morauta, L. (ed.), 1986. *Law and Order in a Changing Society*, Political and Social Change Monograph 6, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

Morrison, D. G., Mitchell, R. C. and Paden, J. N., 1989. *Black Africa: A Comparative Handbook*. London: MacMillan.

Nelson, H., 1980. `Hold the good name of the soldier: the discipline of the Papua and New Guinea Infantry Battalion 1940-1946', *Journal of Pacific History* 15(4): 202-216.

---------, 1972. `*Papua New Guinea: Black Unity or Black Chaos*'. Richmond: Victoria: Penguin Books.

---------, 1980. `*As Bilong Soldia: The Raising of the Papuan Infantry Battalion in 1940'. Yagl-Ambu* 7:1. pp 19-27.

Nonggorr, J., 1993. 'Constitutional crisis in Papua New Guinea: the problem of law and ethics', *The Times* (Port Moresby) 15 March 1993.

Nordlinger, E.A., 1970. 'Soldiers in mufti: the impact of military rule upon economic and social change in the non-Western states', *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 431-48.

O'Callaghan, M-L., 1999. *Enemies Within: Papua New Guinea, Australia, and the Sandline Crisis: The Inside Story*. Milsons Point: Transworld Publishers.

O'Connor, M., 1994. `Papua New Guinea security policies' in A. Thompson (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: Issues for Australian Security Planners*. Canberra: Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra. pp 141-149.

Odetala, T. D., 1982. *Military Regimes and Development: A Comparative Analysis of African States*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Ogan, E., 1971, `*Nasioi land tenure: an extended case history*', *Oceania* 42(2): 81-93.

Ogan, E., 1972, `Business and Cargo: Socio-Economic Change Among the Nasioi', *New Guinea Research Bulletin*, No. 44. 42(2): 81-93.

Ogan, E., 1974, `Cargoism and politics in Bougainville', *Journal of Pacific History*. 9: 117-127

Olewale, E., 1972. `The impact of national institutions on village communities' in M. W. Ward (ed.), *Change and Development in Rural Melanesia*. Canberra: The University of Papua New Guinea and the Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University. pp 219-24.

Oliver, D., 1991. *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville 1937-91*. Melbourne: Hyland House.

---------, 1973. *Bougainville: A Personal History*. Clayton: Wilke & Co.

---------, 1981. *Aspects of Modernisation in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

O'Neill, R. J., 1971. `The army in Papua New Guinea: current role and implications for independence', *New Guinea* 6(1): 6-27.

Osborne, R., 1986. `OPM and the quest for West Papuan unity' in May, R.J. (ed.), *Between Two Nations: The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border and West Papua Nationalism*. Bathurst: R. Brown and Associates. pp 49-64.

Paull, R., 1989. *Retreat from Kokoda: The Australian Campaign in New Guinea 1942*. Melbourne: Mandarin Australia.

Payne, A., 1993. `The politics of small state security in the Pacific' in P. Sutton and A. Payne (eds), *Size and Survival: The Politics of Security in the Caribbean and the Pacific*. London: Frank Cass & Co. pp 103-132.

Peipul, P., 1992. *PNG - Australia Defence Relations*. Working Paper No. 261, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.

Perlmutter, A., 1977. *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, New Haven: Yale University Press

----------, 1981. *Political Roles and Military Rulers*. London: Frank Cass & Co.

Polomka, P. (ed.), 1990. `Bougainville: Perspectives of a Crisis', *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence*. No. 66, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.

Prescott, J.R.V., 1978. `Imperial mapping pens', *Current Affairs Bulletin* 54(8): 265-267.

Quodling, P., 1991. *Bougainville: The Mine and the People*. Sydney: Centre for Independent Studies.

Rizvi, H.A., 1998. `Pakistan: civil-military relations in a praetorian state' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 88-100.

Robie, D., 1989. *Blood on their Banner: Nationalist Struggles in the South Pacific*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

Ryan, J., 1970. *The Hot Land: Focus on New Guinea*. Melbourne: Macmillan.

Saffu, Y., 1991. `Military roles and relations in PNG', in V. Selochan (ed.), *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, Boulder: Westview Press. pp 221-337.

Sarkesian, S. C., 1978. `African military regimes: institutionalised instability or coercive development' in S. W. Simon (ed.), *The Military and Security in the Third World: Domestic and International Impacts*, Boulder: Westview Press. pp 16-21.

Scarr, D., 1990. *The History of the Pacific Islands: Kingdoms of the Reefs*, Melbourne: Macmillan Company of Australia.

Selochan, V. (ed.), 1991. *The Military, the State and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, Boulder: Westview Press.

----------, 1998. `The military and the fragile democracy of the Philippines' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 59-68.

Sharrad, J., 1993. *The Role and Management of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force in the Bougainville Crisis*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of NSW.

Shears, R., 1980. *The Coconut War: The Crisis on Espiritu Santo*. Melbourne: Cassell Australia.

Silverstein, J., 1998. `Burma's struggle for democracy: the army against the people' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 69-87.

Simon, S. W. (ed.), 1978. *The Military and Security in the Third World: Domestic and International Impacts*, Boulder: Westview Press.

Sinclair, J., 1990. *To Find a Path: The Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Australians to Independence*. Volume 1, *Yesterday's Heroes 1885-1950*. Brisbane: Boolarong Publications.

---------, 1992. *To Find a Path: The Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the Australians to Independence*. Volume 2, *Keeping the Peace 1950 – 75*. Bathurst: Crawford House Press.

Somare, M., 1975. *Sana: An Autobiography of Michael Somare*. Port Moresby: Nuigini Press.

Spriggs, M. and Denoon, D. (eds), *The Bougainville Crisis: 1991 Update*. Political and Social Change Monograph 16, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University Canberra/Bathurst: Crawford House Press.

Standish, B., 1994. `Papua New Guinea: the search for security in a weak state', in A. Thompson (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: Issues for Australian Security*

Planners. Canberra: Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra. pp 51-96.

Start, D., 1998. *The Open Cage: Murder and Survival in the Jungles of Irian Jaya*. London: Harper Collins.

Sundhaussen, U., 1973. `New Guinea's army: a political role', *New Guinea* 8(2): 8-41.

Sutton, P. and Payne. A. (eds), 1993. *Size and Survival: The Politics of Security in the Caribbean and the Pacific*. London: Frank Cass & Co.

Thawley, M., 1991. `The Bougainville crisis two years on: Australian policy' in M. Spriggs and D. Denoon (eds), *The Bougainville Crisis: 1991 Update*. Political and Social Change Monograph 16, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. Canberra/Bathurst: Crawford House Press. pp 146-151.

Thompson, A. (ed.), 1994. *Papua New Guinea: Issues for Australian Security Planners*. Canberra: Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra.

Turner, M., 1990. *Papua New Guinea: The Challenge of Independence*. Melbourne: Penguin Books.

Van Der Veur, P. W., 1966. *Search for New Guinea's Boundaries: From Torres Strait to the Pacific*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Vatikiotis, M., 1998. `The military and democracy in Indonesia' in R. J. May and V. Selochan (eds), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*. Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing. pp 29-46.

Warubu, K., 1968. `That army again!', *New Guinea* 3(2): 8-10.

Weigley, R. F., 1991. *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Brietenfeld to Waterloo*. Sydney: Random House.

Welch, C. E., 1974. `Personalism and corporatism in African armies' in C. McA. Kelleher (ed.), *Political-Military Systems: Comparative Perspectives*. Beverley Hills: Sage. pp 125-145.

Woodford, D., 1974. *Papua New Guinea: Initiation and Independence*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Interviews:

Mr P. Bengo, CBE, Secretary, Prime Minister's Department 1989-90

Mr I. Geno, OBE, QPM, Commissioner of Police 1988-90

Mr J. Toguata, OBE, Commander Islands Region, RPNGC 1988-90

Brigadier-General E. Diro, CBE, OStJ, MP, Commander, PNGDF 1975-82

Brigadier-General R. Lokinap, CBE, Commander, PNGDF 1987-92

Brigadier-General A. Huai, CBE, Commander, PNGDF 1985-87, 1994-95

Brigadier-General J. Singirok, MBE, Commander, PNGDF 1995-1997

Brigadier-General K. Noga, CBE, Commander, PNGDF 1982-85

Colonel L. Nuia, OBE, Deputy Controller Bougainville 16 Oct 1989-16 Mar 1990

Colonel L. Dotaona, CBE, Deputy Controller Bougainville 1989

Colonel J. Bau Maras, OBE, Acting Commander PNGDF 1989

Colonel R. Dademo, OBE, Chief of Staff, 1990-1992

Colonel D. Josiah, OBE, Chief of Personnel, 1990-1992

Lieutenant Colonel W. Salamas, Commanding Officer 1 RPIR, 1989

Lieutenant Colonel G. Key, MBE, Commanding Officer 1 RPIR 1988-89

Lieutenant Colonel R. Ormston (Retired), Platoon Commander, 1 PIR 1967-68

Lieutenant Colonel V. Mae, LVO, Commanding Officer, 1 RPIR 1985-87

Lieutenant Colonel Ignatious Lai, Commanding Officer, Air Transport Squadron

Lieutenant Colonel J. Lytus, Staff Officer Grade 1, Personnel Branch, 1988-89

Major B. Kavanamur, Second in Command, 1 RPIR

Major E. Kamara, Operations Officer, 1 RPIR

Major D. De Markus, Officer Commanding B Company, 1 RPIR 1989

Major I. Yamo, Company Commander, 1 RPIR

Lieutenant P. Kaliop, Acting Second in Command, B Company, 1 RPIR 1989

Lieutenant P. Iatau, Platoon Commander, 1 RPIR

Lieutenant Y. Liria, Intelligence Officer, 1 RPIR 1989

Mr J. Wall, OBE, Special Adviser to Prime Minister Namaliu 1989-90

Superintendent D. Ramathugula, Staff Officer to Commissioner, RPNGC 1984-85

Emeritus Professor J. Griffin

Mr E. Daniels, Head, Defence Intelligence Branch 1990-92

Mr B. Sabumei, Defence Minister 1987

Mr J. Pokasui, Defence Minister 1987

Mr P. Tohian, Police Commissioner 1988-89/ Defence Minister 1990/1991

Mr J. Siau, Provincial Secretary NSP 1986-88

Mr T. Maketu, Secretary of Defence 1986-87

Mr S. Mokis, Secretary of Defence 1988

Mr W. Lussick, OBE, Member CPC 1971-73

Mr L. Daveona, Panguna Landowner